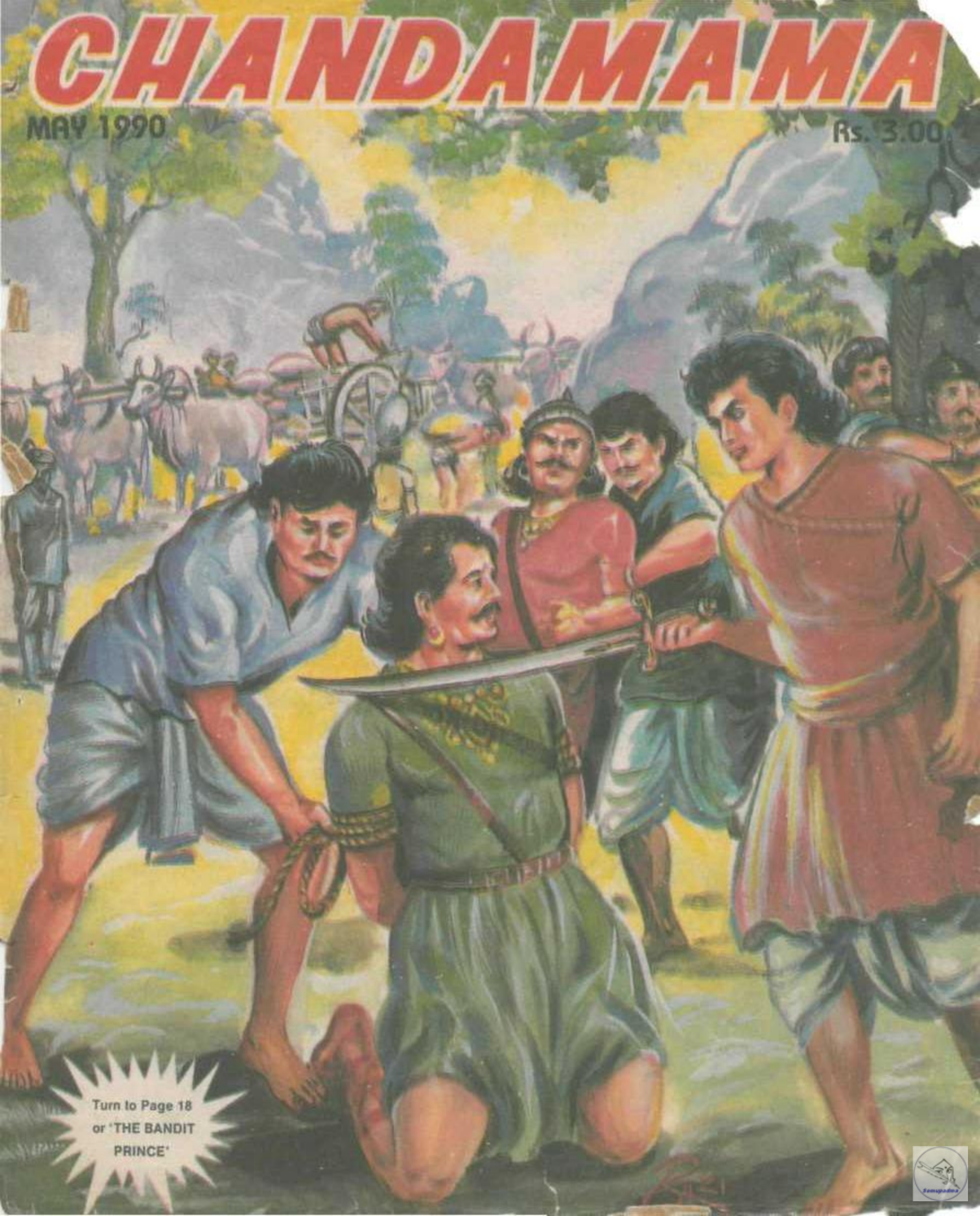


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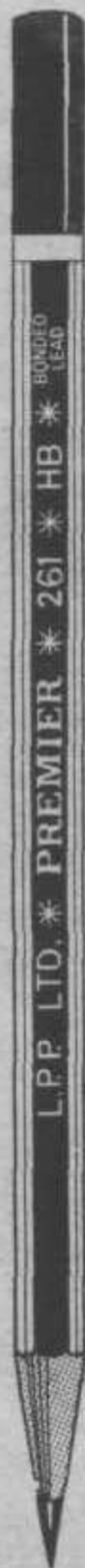
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and More!**

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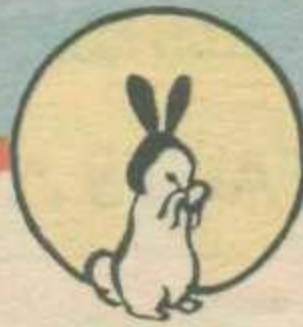
MOMENTS WITH THE UNKNOWN: Unusual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna—through pictures.

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DEATH OF A GREAT SEA

Can you imagine that the world's sixth largest sea would totally dry up in just another twenty years, by the year 2010?

Believe it or not, two-third of the famous Aral Sea is no longer there. Who turned the vast water into mud, swamp and sand? Who but man! And in less than thirty years.

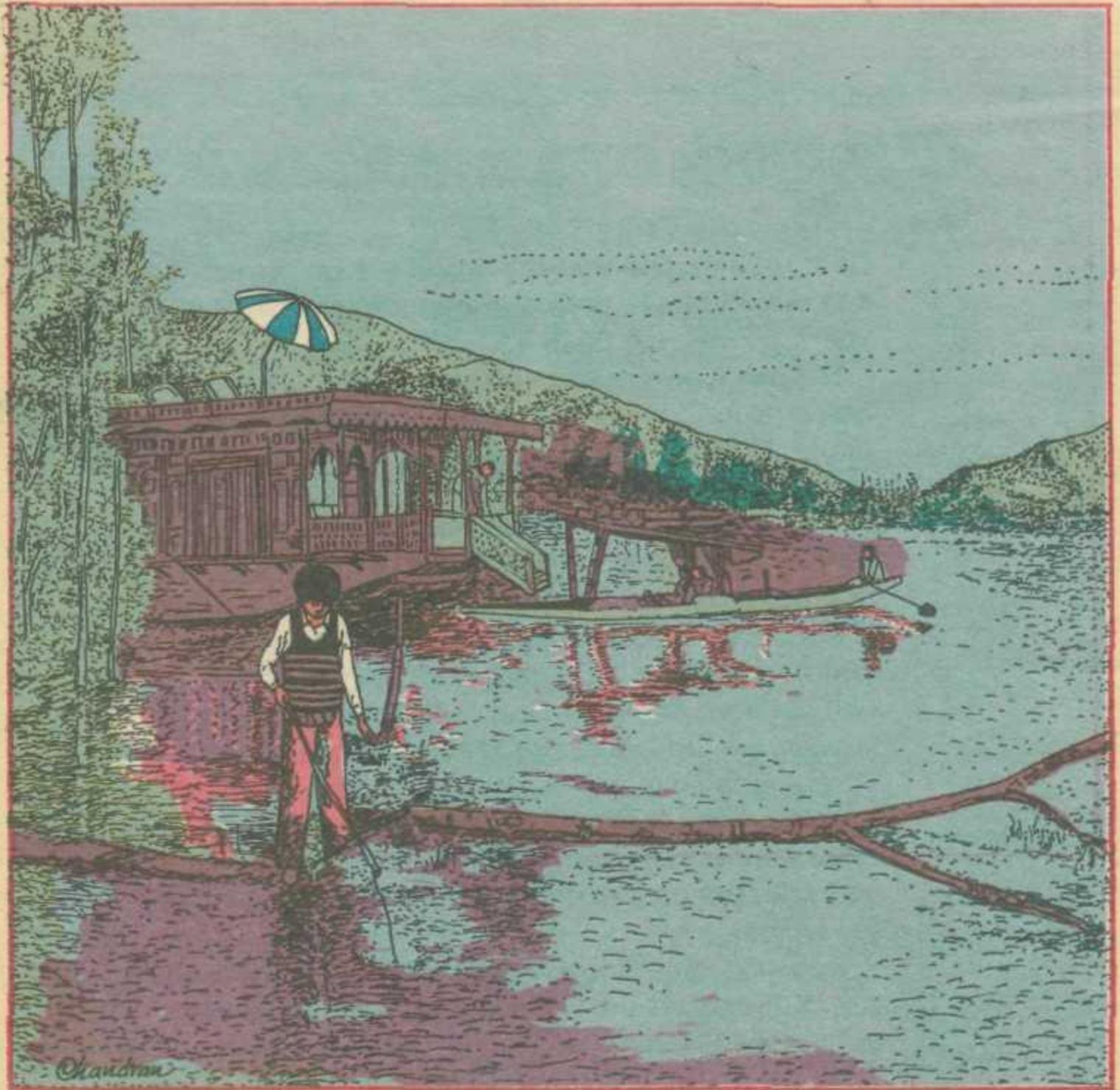
This sea, surrounded by land in the Soviet Union, is drying because the waters of two big rivers, Amu Darya and Syr Darya, were diverted to the desert areas of the Central Asia for greater cotton cultivation. The danger of the sea drying had not been foreseen. Now, when the bad effect is seen, it is too late to stop the cotton cultivation.

The economy of the area is dependent on that.

Let us hope that the new progressive leadership of the Soviet Union will find a way to save the sea, with the help of experts from other parts of the world.

However, the dying Aral Sea is a warning to the world. We must be very careful if we have to tamper with Nature.

KASHMIR: FACTS AND FICTION



Legends say that Kashmir derives its name from Kashyap, a great sage. Kashyap-mir has become Kashmir.

In olden days India had more states than we have today. Instead of being ruled by popular ministries and assemblies, they

were ruled by Rajas. But they all belonged to Bharata Varsha or India. No Raja ever claimed that his state was outside India.

Towards the last years of India's struggle for freedom, the Muslim League, under the leadership of Jinnah, demanded a separate sovereign country for Muslims. It is well-known today that some Englishmen encouraged him to make this demand. Many prominent Muslim leaders did not like the division of the country on the basis of religion. But Jinnah had his way. India was divided.

The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Sir Hari Singh, was yet to decide what he should do. But Pakistan had no patience. It instigated a large number of its tribesmen to invade Kashmir. At the advice of Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the Muslims of Kashmir who are the majority in that state, the Maharaja decided to accede his state to the Indian Union. The Indian government immediately rushed its troops who repulsed the invaders. But the invaders had already occupied a big area of Kashmir. India had just achieved independence

and it did not want to wage a bloody war to throw these invaders out. All experts agree that India could have easily liberated the occupied area, if it had wished to do so. But India sent the matter to the Security Council of the United Nations.

This occupied area is pompously named by Pakistan as "Azad Kashmir". The people of this area live in utter poverty and lack of education, in contrast to the people in Kashmir which is a part of India.

It has been proved that the formation of a country on the basis of religion does not mean anything. The people of Bangladesh are Muslims. But they broke away from Pakistan. We have more Muslims in India than there are in Pakistan! But some people are blind to the reality. Pakistanis are trying their best to give false hopes of prosperity to Kashmiris and are training some of them to create violence and anarchy, kidnapping sensible people and killing them.

Thus Kashmir is passing through a difficult time.





STORY OF

BUDDHA

—By Manoj Das

(The Buddha, partly through the force of his doctrines and partly through the spell of his personality, created a great impact on the minds of tens of thousands of people.)

THE LAST DAYS

The monsoon set in when the Buddha reached Vaisali. His disciples who belonged to the locality had raised huts and sheds in a large green grove. The Buddha had decided to camp there till the end of the rainy season.

The Buddha had just settled down when an elegant chariot

stopped at the entrance into the grove. A beautiful lady, adorned with jewellery and costly clothes, alighted from the chariot.

Bowing to the Buddha, she said, "Master, I am Ambapalli, a courtesan. I invite you to dine at my house! May my prayer be granted."

"It is granted, my child," said



the Buddha.

The delighted courtesan had just left the grove when a group of noblemen arrived there. "Master, we have come to invite you to dine with us," they said.

"But I have already promised to dine at Ambapalli's house!" the Buddha told them.

The noblemen went away, but a disciple informed the Buddha how disappointed they felt. "Should the Buddha ignore the offer of our hospitality in order to respect a mere courtesan's invitation?" they had been heard saying. The disciple also informed him that Ambapalli belonged to a lower caste.

"Do you know how many rivers flow into the sea?" asked the Buddha.

"Many, my lord," replied the disciple.

"And do you know that some of them are great and some are small, the waters of some are clear and those of others muddy?"

"Yes, my lord."

"But can you differentiate among them once they have merged in the sea?"

"I cannot, my lord!"

"Don't all the waters become a part of the sea?"



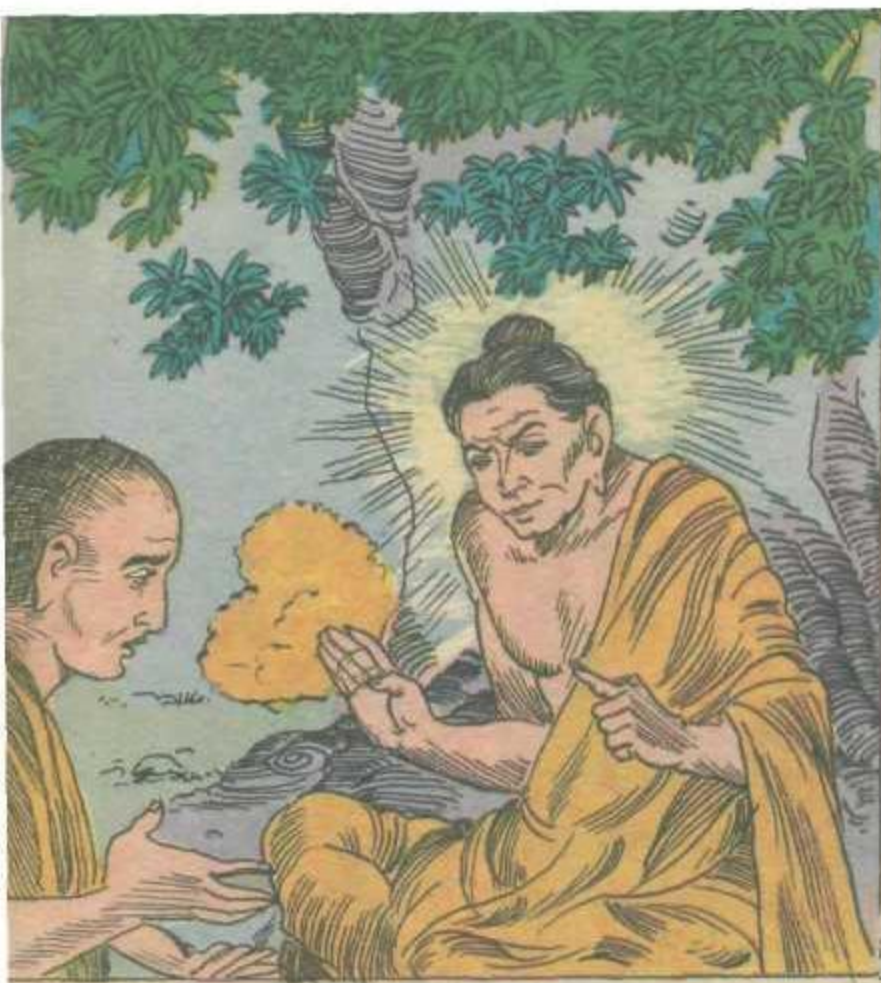
"So they become, my lord."

The Buddha paused and said, "It is the same with human beings. Once they open themselves unto a higher truth, they are all seekers. Their social status and castes make no difference to me."

Ambapalli received the Buddha with great devotion and, when he and his companions had finished eating, asked, "My lord, has this mere courtesan any right to offer something to the Buddha?"

"Yes, my child!" said the Buddha.

"The grove in which you are camping belongs to me. Since it



has been blessed by your stay, let it continue to serve the cause of the Buddha," said Ambapalli.

"Let it be so. It shall be used by the Order of Monks," said the Buddha.

Two of the worthy disciples of the Buddha, Sariputta and Maugallayan, had already died. Comparable to them was Ananda, who was never tired of serving the Master and was capable of following the meaning of every word or gesture of the Master. Ananda observed that the Buddha was no longer the same person. Now in his eightieth year, he was rapidly growing weak and was frequently sick.

One evening, when nobody else was near the Buddha, Ananda was suddenly beset with a strange fear.

"My Master!" he called softly. "You will be with us for long and guide us, isn't it so?" he asked.

"I have done whatever I had to do. Now the Order must take care of itself," replied the Buddha in a low but firm voice.

Ananda felt a shock. He looked at the Buddha with great concern. The Buddha smiled and said, "You have guessed right, Ananda. I am not to live very long."

"Don't say so, my lord! Who will guide the Order in your absence? And who will guide me towards perfection?" Ananda cried out.

"Don't be so child-like, Ananda. Did you expect me to live forever?" asked the Master. "And so far as your own journey towards perfection is concerned, have I not set you on the right path? You must learn to proceed along the path with the help of my teachings."

The rainy season was over. The Buddha now set out for a village named Kusinara. Sometime before that he had promised to a



blacksmith named Kunda that one day he would be his guest. Now that he was about to pass through Kunda's village, Pava, Kunda came running to him and reminded him of his promise.

The Buddha agreed to eat a meal at Kunda's house.

He reached there much later than expected. Although Kunda had made elaborate preparations, some of the items had gone rancid. Kunda had great devotion for the Buddha, but he had not been careful enough to find out what would suit the Buddha's habit in regard to food. The prize item Kunda had prepared was meat—and very proudly he

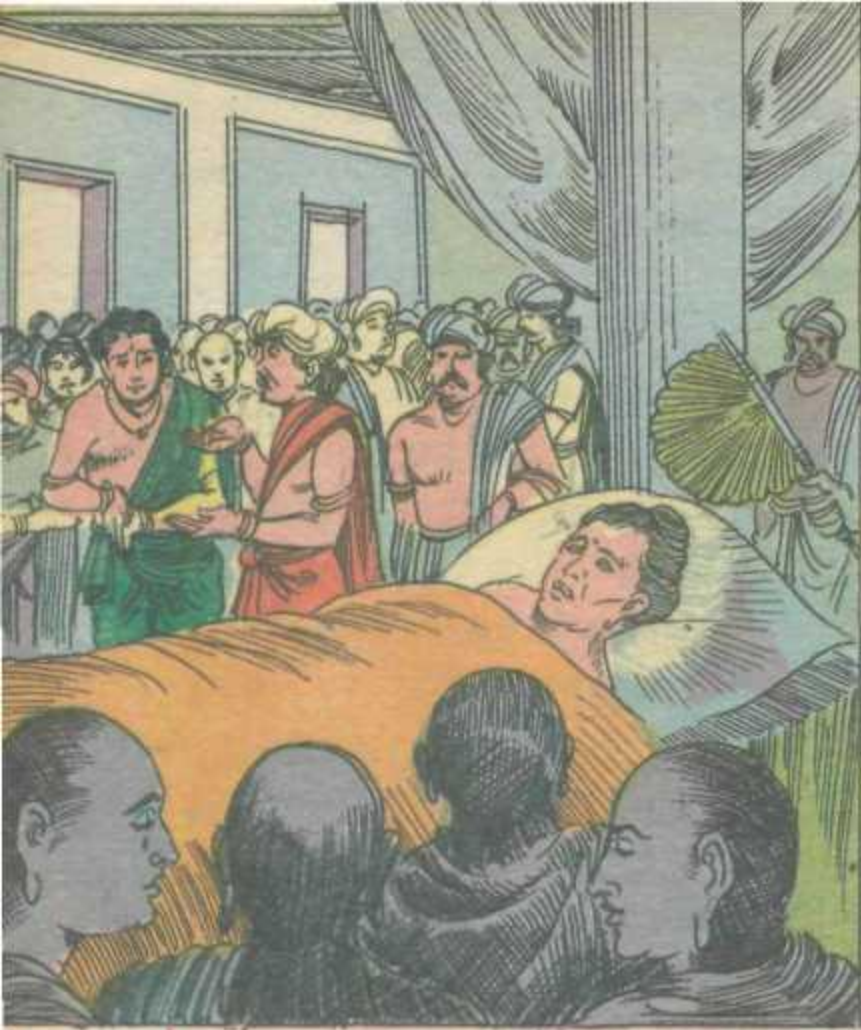
spread the main dish before the august guest. His relatives and kinsmen looked on as Kunda pleaded with the Buddha to do justice to his offering.

The Buddha looked at the dish. Apart from the fact that he did not eat meat, it was already spoilt. The Buddha then looked at Kunda who was obviously very proud of playing host to the Buddha.

Should the Buddha refuse to eat the meat, Kunda would feel insulted. Silently he ate as much as he could. Kunda was delighted.

But the Buddha, no sooner had he left Kunda's house, fell sick.





After some rest on the bank of a river, he finally reached Kusinara.

"Ananda! This would be my final resting place!" he told Ananda.

"What!" Ananda shrieked. "Must you pass away at as insignificant a place as this? My lord, why not wait till we reach a holy city like Varanasi or a famous city like Rajagriha or Shravasti?"

"Known as Kusavati in a remote past, this too is a sacred place, Ananda! And there is not much time left. I will leave my body and enter Nirvana at the beginning of the third quarter of

the night."

"My lord, for your disciples, to meet you was the greatest blessing. Where would they go hereafter?" asked the anxious Ananda.

"Ananda, I leave behind me four sacred places for them to visit, the place of my birth, the place where I attained enlightenment, the place where I taught for the first time and the place where I attain Nirvana!" said the Buddha.

To the weeping Ananda, the Buddha said again, "The light to guide you remains deep within your heart. Seek for it; don't worry."

The Buddha reclined on his bed. He was tired. But the people of the nearby locality came rushing to see him. And when they learnt that the Master's last hour on the earth was nearing, they were even more eager to have a glimpse of him. Among them was a scholar named Subhadra who would like to put some questions to the Buddha. Ananda would not like him to do that, for had not the Master answered enough questions all these years? Must he be disturbed even at this moment?

But when the Buddha saw

Ananda persuading Subhadra to keep quiet, he summoned the scholar near him. Subhadra stated his doubts and the Master answered them with patience. Subhadra was fully satisfied. There was total silence under a bright full moon shining over the trees. The compassionate Buddha surveyed the crowd and asked, "Has anyone else any doubt to be removed?"

No. Nobody was in a mood to trouble him with questions. Everybody stood watching him with wonder though with heavy hearts too.

"Good. Now, O Seekers, remember that everything passes. Nothing remains the same. But never stop seeking," said the Buddha and he closed his eyes.

Ananda and his near ones knew that the Master was in a

trance. Soon after the third quarter of the night began, they knew that the Buddha had left his body.

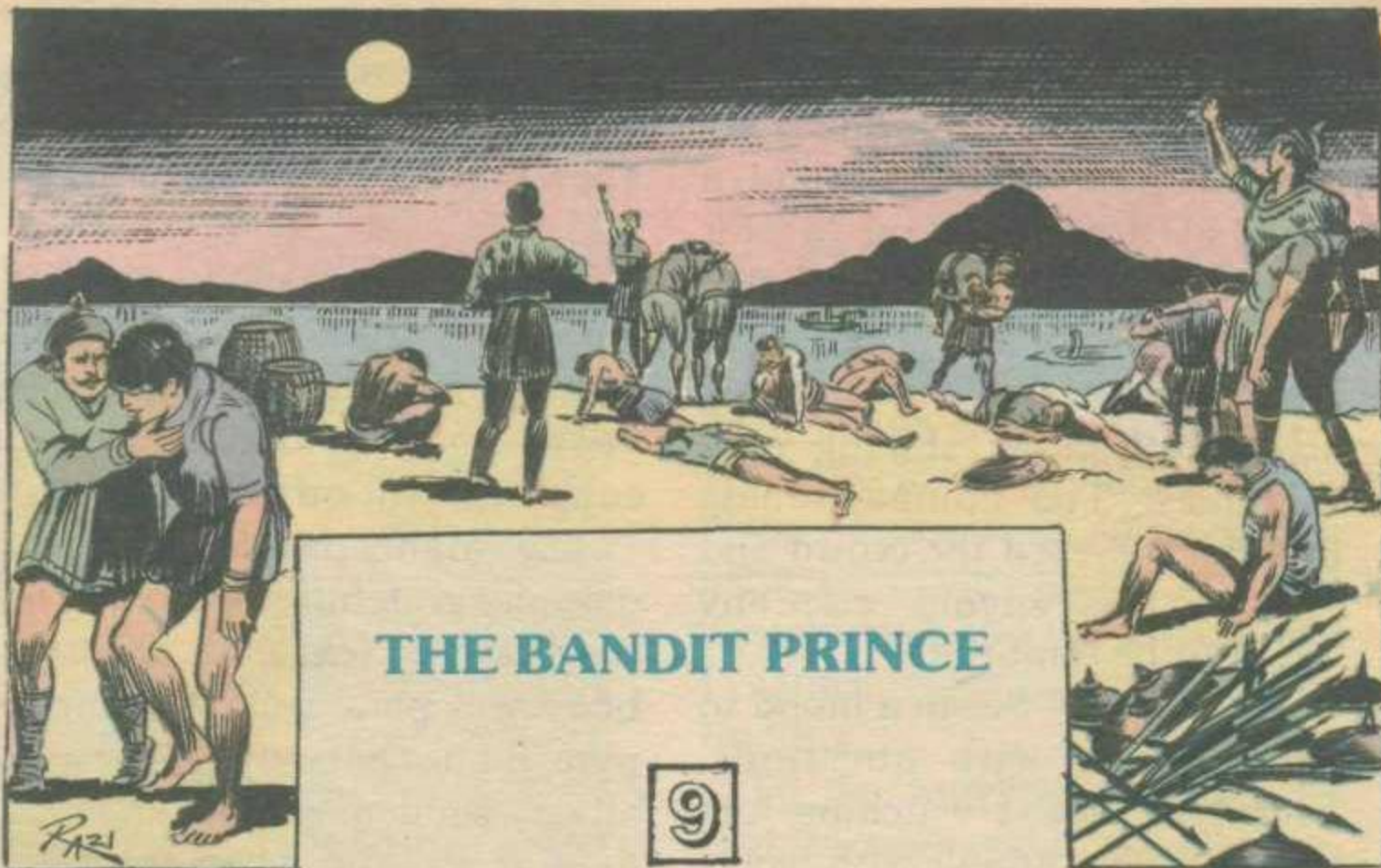
It was the full moon night in the month of Baisakh. The Buddha was born on this day eighty years ago; he had attained enlightenment on this day too.

The night passed with the disciples gratefully meditating on the Master. Next day, when the body was placed on the funeral pyre, flames burst out of the pyre all on a sudden, without anybody lighting it. And when the body had been reduced to ashes, a sudden shower extinguished the fire.

But the flame the Buddha had lighted in thousands of hearts was only beginning to spread.

THE END





THE BANDIT PRINCE

9

(Vir Singh decides to attack Amritpur, the kingdom ruled by Pavitra Raj, the father-in-law of King Shanti Dev. As his army is crossing the river, a great flood sweeps it away.)

The calamity was so unexpected that Vir Singh stood speechless on the river-bank for a long time. His new general, Kapalchand, did not dare to utter a word. However, the other officers who had escaped the fury of the flood tried to save from the fateful currents whatever they could—arms as well as the

drowning soldiers.

But the greater part of the arms was lost. The boats which were carrying them had been upturned. Ironically, some of the arms were recovered by the soldiers of Amritpur who were standing on their side of the river, ready to give a fight to the invaders. They even dragged

THE REBELS STRIKE

ashore many of the drowning soldiers of Vir Singh. Of course, the rescued men were taken prisoners.

King Pavitra told his officers, "By all means keep the arms you have recovered, for now we need not have either any sympathy or any fear for Vir Singh. Rather we should see to it that the wicked fellow does not get another chance to strengthen his army. We might have been weak, but now luck has **made** Vir Singh weaker. He should remain like that. However, set free those unfortunate prisoners of war. We need not wreak our vengeance on them!"

The two topmost officers of Amritpur, the general and the minister, met their king, Pavitra, once again in private. "My lord," said the general, "some of the soldiers of Shantipur who were saved by our men from the river do not wish to return to Shantipur. They pray that they be allowed to join our army."

The king thought for a moment and then said, "It is my misfortune that I was grievously sick when Vir Singh usurped the throne of Sumedh. I am yet to know what happened to my son-in-law, my daughter and my



grandson. I am afraid, the worst has happened to them. Vir Singh must have planned his conspiracy in such a way that none of the three would have come out of his murderous net. But now that I have recovered, I must do everything possible to find out the truth. If I did not wish to go to war with Vir Singh, it is because war brings suffering for the common men. But if Vir Singh causes more suffering to the people than a war would cause, we should check him. Yes, you may retain those soldiers of Vir Singh who wish to join us."

"My lord," this time the minister said, "the old minister of our



beloved King Shanti Dev escaped an attempt on his life. He is now in our land.”

“Is that so? I knew that he was a good man and a wise man. But I did not know that he was heroic enough to escape assassins!” observed King Pavitra.

“My lord, he was saved by a mysterious man who suddenly appeared on the scene, riding a horse. Swinging his sword like a streak of lightning, the mysterious man instantly killed all the three fellows who had pounced on the minister. And the minister suspects the rider to be none other than ...”

King Pavitra sat up on his bed

and, betraying great eagerness, asked, “Who—who was that mysterious saviour? Was he our son-in-law? Bring the old minister to me. I will like to talk to him.”

“I will bring him along, my lord. Let me bring to your notice something more. A young man of Sumedh named Vasant too was saved by the same mysterious rider. This young man is a great admirer of our beloved King Shanti Dev, and he is determined to fight the tyranny of Vir Singh. He has many supporters in Shantipur. He lives hiding in the forest, but often moves about in Sumedh, under disguise. It was he who gave us the news of Vir Singh’s impending attack on our kingdom. I do not know what should be our attitude towards him,” said the minister.

Once again the king thought for a moment and then said, “My attitude is clear. In spite of Vir Singh doing the most grave injustice to our son-in-law, we did not interfere in the affairs of Sumedh. But by trying to attack us, Vir Singh has forfeited his right to expect any courtesy from us. We must encourage Vasant and his friends to rise against the tyrant. You know best how to do

it!"

"I know, my lord. Thank you very much. There is no reason why we should not patronise Vasant and his group," commented the minister.

* * *

Vir Singh returned to the palace, from the river-bank, a sad man. Next day he summoned his new general, Kapalchand, and asked, "How is it that nobody warned us about the possibility of a flood?"

"My lord, the flood during this season is a rare phenomenon. Nobody could have anticipated it. In fact, the court-astrologer had said that it was an auspicious hour," answered Kapalchand.

"Put the astrologer to death—forthwith!" commanded Vir Singh.

"My lord, he is missing. He had been last seen standing behind our army on the river-bank. Either he has drowned or has escaped to Amritpur!"

"Oh Amritpur! Amritpur! We wanted to destroy it. Now it seems Amritpur will destroy us!" cried out Vir Singh in anguish.

"My lord, we will never let it do so. We will conquer it. It is a question of time—and gathering

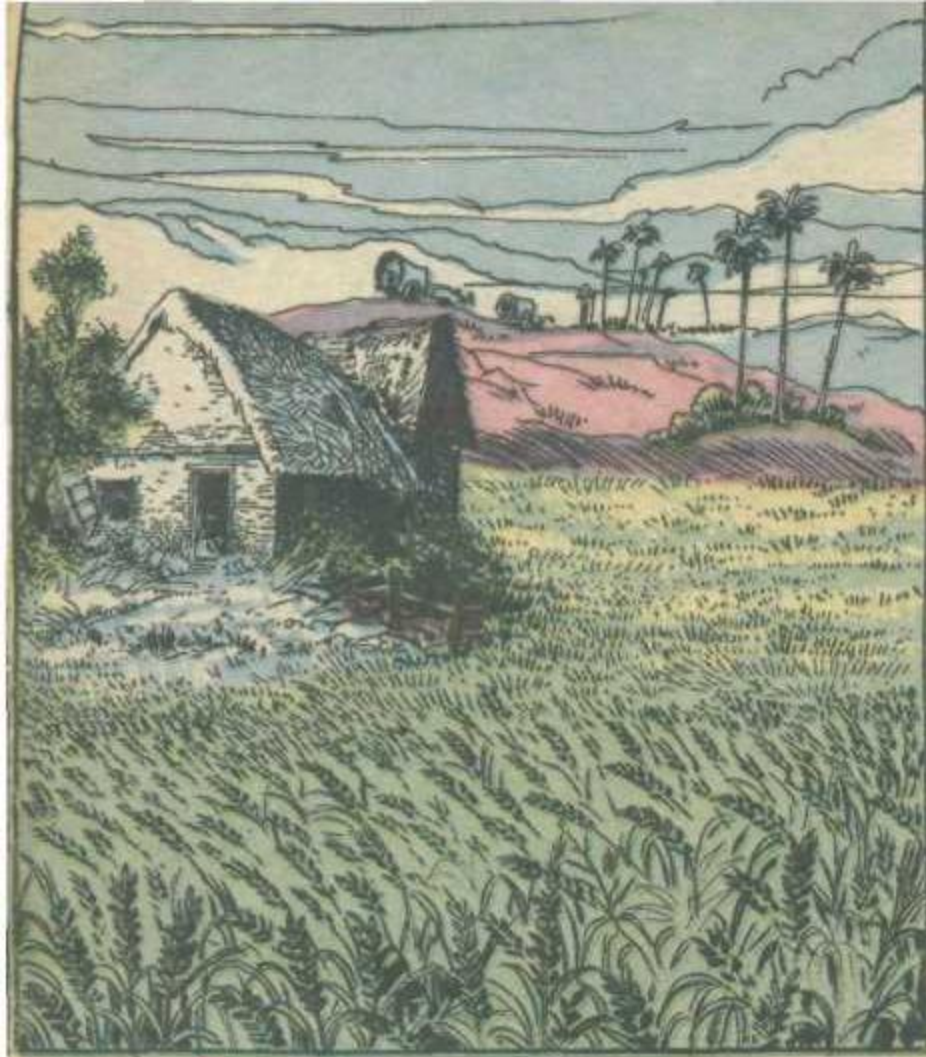


new weapons—and rebuilding our army!" said Kapalchand in a reassuring voice.

"How long to wait? How to gather new weapons? How to rebuild the army?" Vir Singh asked impatiently.

"My lord, everything depends on resources. If we have enough wealth, we can buy new arms from distant lands and recruit soldiers from some ruthless tribes—also from some distant lands."

"But where is wealth? Shanti Dev had left the treasury almost empty, spending everything in constructing roads, digging ponds, building dispensaries,



rest-houses and schools or giving out doles to the needy. What to do?" Vir Singh expressed his anguish once again.

"My lord, there has been a bumper crop in Shantipur. We have plenty of rice. But the price of rice is very high—almost five times more—in the kingdom of Chandrahat. And as you know, Chandrahat is famous for swords and spears of excellent quality. We won't have to spend any money. We can collect the necessary arms in exchange for rice," said Kapalchand.

"A good idea!" exclaimed Vir Singh. "Collect half of the total produce of rice from all the

landowners as taxes. And so far as the big ones are concerned, collect three-fourth from them."

"We will do so," said Kapalchand. "We will begin with the big landlords."

Raghunath was a benevolent landlord. He owned a large paddy-growing estate. Hundreds of villagers took rice from him according to their needs and paid him at their convenience, in cash or kind. This practice had prevailed for many years—beginning in a bygone generation.

It was an afternoon. Nearly one hundred villagers had gathered before Raghunath's granary. Raghunath's clerks and servants were ready to oblige them.

Suddenly a young officer of Vir Singh's court arrived there. He was accompanied by a dozen sepoy. About fifty bullock-carts followed them.

"We demand three-fourth of the total rice raised by you," the officer told Raghunath.

"May I know why?" asked Raghunath.

"This is your tax to the king!" was the reply.

"But I have paid my tax! There is no arrear against me!"

"This is a new tax! We will take the rice to Chandrahat," said the captain.

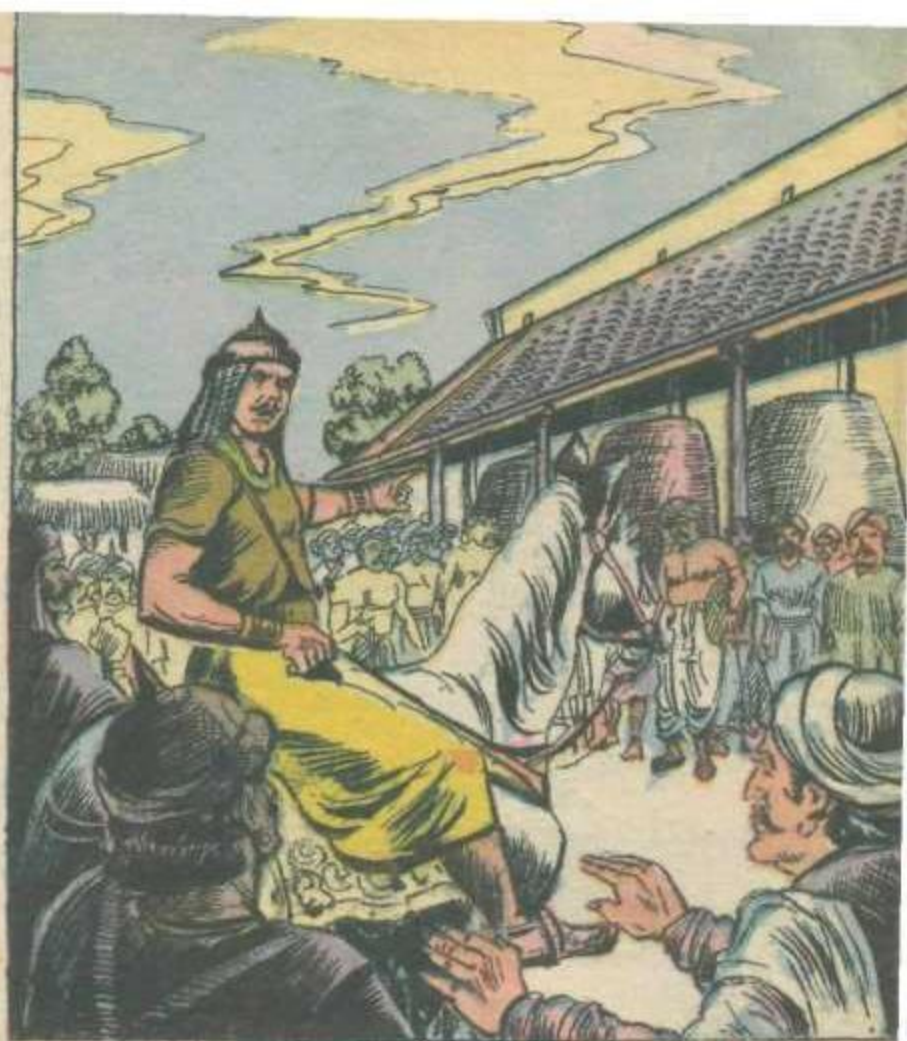
Raghunath stood helpless. "Sir, what about the villagers who depend on this rice?" he asked.

"They must not depend on this. That is all," said the captain curtly. His sepoy's compelled the villagers to carry the bags of rice to the carts, under the threat of whips. All the pleadings of Raghunath and the other villagers went in vain.

By the time the carts were fully loaded, it was evening. The caravan of carts began moving. The remorseful villagers followed the carts. At the first the officer did not mind that. In fact he derived some pleasure out of the poor folks heaving sighs of distress behind his caravan. But after a while he grew suspicious. He was afraid, some young men were inspiring them to follow the caravan.

"Go away!" he shouted at them, turning his horse towards them and waving his sword.

"Strike!" shouted someone from the villagers. The caravan had reached a mountain pass. Someone threw a rope with a



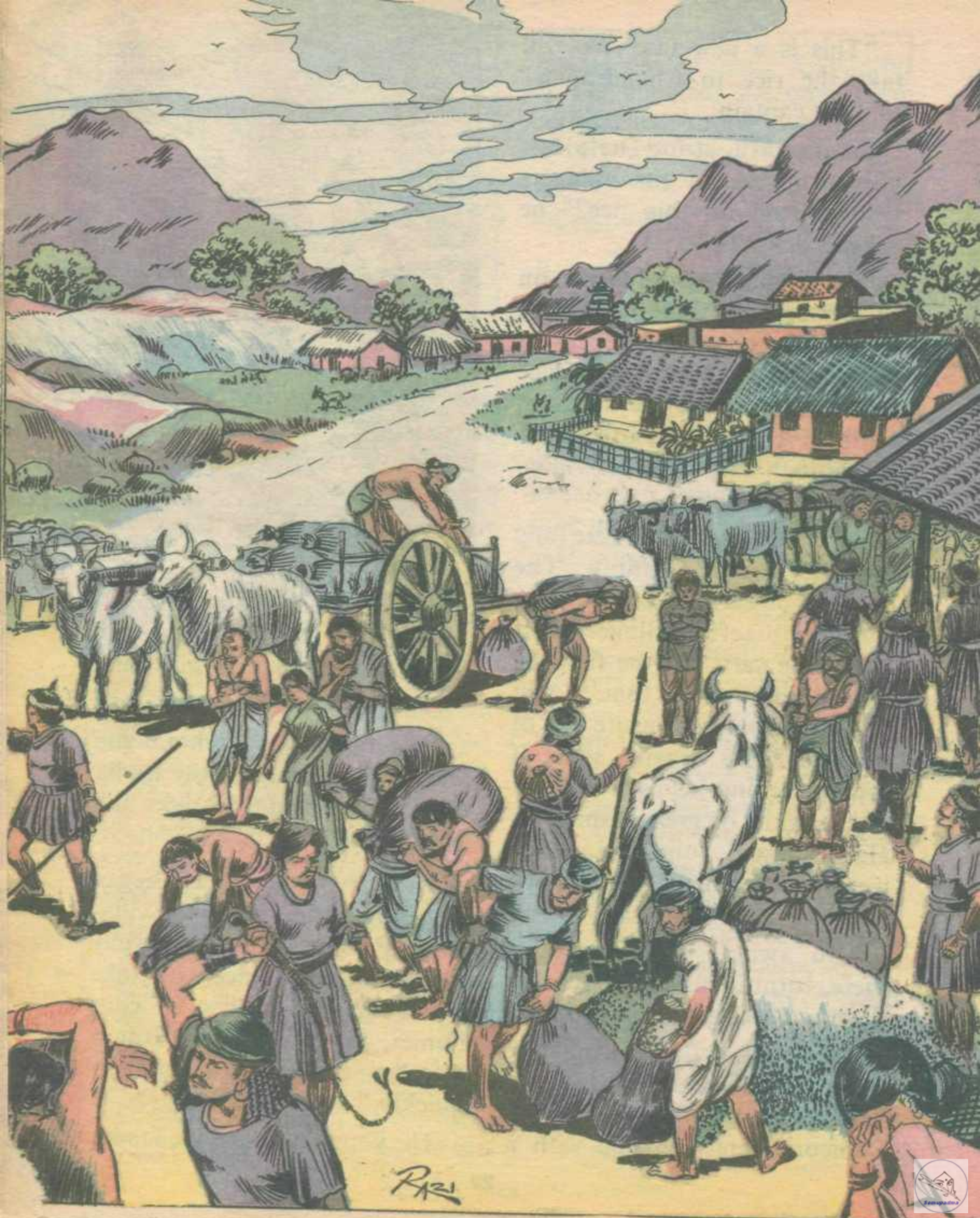
noose from the top of a rock and pulled the officer from the horse-back. Some twenty young men descended from the hills and captured the sepoy's.

"We do not wish to harm you fellows. Keep quiet," the leader of the group told the officer and his sepoy's.

Then the young men began distributing the rice to the villagers. "Pay the landlord faithfully and truthfully. Once you take these small quantities to your homes, Vir Singh's men cannot afford to collect them. Go away quickly."

The young men tied the sepoy's







and their officers to the nearby trees. "Don't worry. We will notify Kapalchand about you. He will arrange to free you. We will also notify the owners of these carts. Tell Kapalchand that

he must not forcibly take away anybody's rice or anybody's cart. We will not allow him to do so!" the leader of the group who was none other than Vasant, told the officer. **— To continue**

TRIUMPH OF GOODNESS

Germany under Hitler brutally killed millions of Jews in Europe. Germany ran over France and set up a puppet Government. This Government also helped the Germans to deport 80,000 French Jews to death-camps.

But there was a village in France named La Chambon in which only five thousand people lived. They gave shelter to five thousand Jews. This brave and noble deed of theirs has come to light recently. A film is being made on this subject. When outsiders ask the villagers how they did it, their reply is, "We helped them because they needed to be helped! What is so special about it?"

In other words, to be helpful and good are natural human traits. Man's cruelty is his perversion.



THE MULTI-PURPOSE DONATION

The people of Kumarpet decided to build a temple. A committee was formed with Ram Singh the astrologer as the President and Vishnu Roy the veterinary doctor as the Secretary.

The committee realised donations from all the families, but it never approached Jagat Pradhan. Though Jagat was the richest man in the village, he was also the greatest miser.

One day Ram Singh and Vishnu Roy happened to come face to face with Jagat. As they exchanged greetings, Ram Singh said, "Jagat, we are building a temple,"

"That is what we should do! Can I help in any way?" asked Jagat.

"Of course you can! Should we meet you at your home?" asked Ram and Vishnu.

"Please do so!" said Jagat.

Ram and Vishnu went to Jagat's house. Jagat welcomed them and said, "I should have myself gone to you with my humble contribution. But the condition of my cow bothers me. It has developed a boil in its right ear."

Vishnu examined the cow immediately and prescribed a certain juice and said, "It will be cured in three days!"

"The other thing that worries me is where to build my cowshed," said Jagat.

The astrologer looked in all the directions and said, "That stretch of land under the banyan tree would be good."

"Thanks," said Jagat and he gave ten rupees as his donation for the temple.

On their way back, Ram told Vishnu, "So, brother, he saved ten rupees on consulting us individually, paying five rupees to each of us, while he took the pride of donating to the temple fund!"

The two friends laughed.





TALES FROM MANY LANDS (FRANCE)

WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE BEAUTIFUL BIG FEET?

Long long ago there was a handsome prince in France named Pipin. His father died and it was decided that he should ascend the throne without much delay. But according to the custom of the age, the coronation could not be considered complete unless he had his queen by his side. And there was no queen to sit by his side simply because he was yet to marry!

And why should he not marry? Well, princes had their own whims and Prince Pipin desired to marry the princess with the most beautiful face. In fact he had already despatched a committee of experts on beauty to

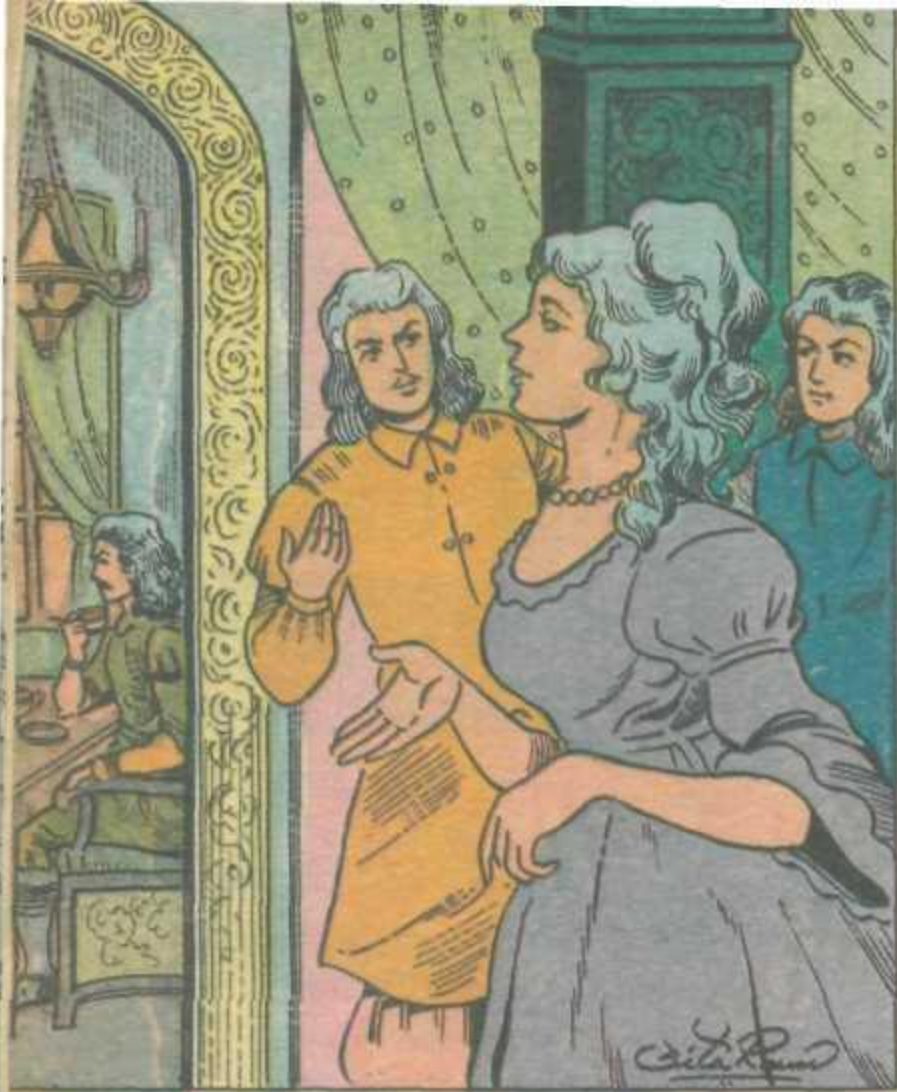
survey all the eligible princesses in different kingdoms and he was expecting their report any day.

And the committee was back soon. The members were unanimous that no princess had as beautiful a face as Princess Bertha of Hungary. But her feet were rather big.

"I don't mind that as long as she has the most beautiful face," said Prince Pipin.

So, an official delegation with a lot of presents was sent to Hungary. The king and the queen of Hungary were happy with the proposal and they despatched their daughter to France with her dearest friend and maid, Aliste.





Bertha and Aliste had to spend many days in travelling to France, camping in valleys and towns at night. At last when their party arrived at its destination, Bertha was so tired that she fell asleep immediately. But before that she told Aliste, "Do not disturb me tonight. You may represent me in any function. You are so much like me that nobody would find out that you were not me!"

Aliste was looking with great wonder and joy at the city, from the balcony of the palace. Suddenly some royal messengers came to her and said, "The auspicious moment is at hand. Come on immediately." They

practically dragged her into a decorated hall. Little did Aliste know that the function about to commence was the wedding proper!

She was pushed into one ritual after another at such speed that at no point she could speak out that she was not the bride! Well, soon she felt great fun at acting as the king's bride! And before long she was pronounced the queen!

All this was fun, no doubt, but she could not get over the fear of Bertha. What would happen when Bertha would wake up and claim that she was the bride?

Now, two officers of the king who were in the party that had gone to fetch the bride, knew the difference between Bertha and Aliste. They whispered to Aliste at an opportune moment, "Will you like us to tie Bertha hand and foot and leave her in the forest? You can pay us for our services later. We are in no hurry for that."

Aliste hesitated and said, "I think that is the only sensible thing to do now!"

So, it was done. Bertha was gagged, tied, bundled and carried to the forest. She was left at a spot around which there were dens of tigers! The officers were

sure that nothing of the bundle, save its covers, would be there to see the sunlight.

But Bertha struggled for a long time and managed to free herself by morning. She could imagine what had happened. She wept for a while. Should she find out the way to the palace and expose the mischief? She wondered. Then she decided to bear with the situation. The officers could have killed her! If they did not, that should be satisfaction enough for her.

And what was wrong with the forest, after all? It was a peaceful place. There was a sweet brook. Fruits and roots were available in plenty. Bertha could even recognise a few vegetables which tasted delicious when cooked.

Soon she located a cave that could serve as her abode. She also made fire by rubbing one stone against another.

She continued to live in the forest. The tigers somehow decided to leave her in peace.

At some distance lived some forest-dwellers. They were surprised to see her. But their chieftain said, "What is surprising in the goddess of the forest living in the forest? Haven't you seen her feet? They are big like



those of a goddess!" Thereafter they would carry different gifts to her and silently leave them in front of her cave.

Meanwhile King Pipin told Aliste, "How much they scared me by saying that you had big feet! If your feet are big, mine must be huge!"

"My lord, they must have seen me with big shoes. Big shoes are a fashion in Hungary," said Aliste.

Days were passing smoothly. But one evening something most unexpected happened. Someone came running and announced that the queen of Hungary was there! She was coming in! She was here!

The queen stormed in. Aliste

did not know what to do. She blew the lamp off.

The queen hugged her. But as the queen's feet touched her feet, the queen exclaimed, "I decided to give you a pleasant surprise, but I am surprised myself with your feet. What happened to those beautiful big feet?"

Someone lighted the lamp. "And what happened to your beautiful small face? Oh, this is only Aliste. Where is my Bertha?" demanded the queen.

Aliste broke down. The king did not know what to make out of the scene. Then, crying and sobbing, Aliste confessed to everything that had happened.

The king and his mother-in-law stood stunned and aghast. Then said Bertha's mother, "Let us not waste time. Let us go into the forest and look for Bertha."

They reached the part of the forest where Bertha had been left.

The two officers who had carried her there, though under arrest, led the way.

They met some forest-dwellers and asked them if they had seen a beautiful girl the like of whom they would have never seen! They replied, "We have seen none but the goddess of the forest—the goddess with a pair of beautiful big feet!"

"With a pair of beautiful big feet? Where is she?" asked the queen of Hungary most anxiously.

They were led to Bertha's cave. The mother and the daughter hugged each other. They returned to the palace. Bertha was married to the king. The two nasty officers were whipped for their wickedness, but were also thanked for not killing Bertha.

But Aliste was not to be seen. Nobody knows where she went.

—Retold by Vindusar





ONE HUNDRED VILLAGES AS DOWRY!

There was a Sultan who knew nothing but his own pleasures. He remained drunk most of the time. When he should be in the court discussing the problems of his Sultanate, he was in his private chamber, listening to songs written in his praise.

Nevertheless, he was a good man. He had just gone astray. There was nobody among his courtiers who would try to arouse sense in him. Were all the courtiers fools? Not so. The situation suited them well. They exploited the people mercilessly. Corruption and cruelty became the rule of the land. Thousands of families migrated to the neighbouring countries.

A childhood friend of the Sultan, who was a Nawab in another country, once visited the Sultan. The Sultan was very happy. One evening the two

friends were enjoying a stroll in the garden when the Nawab suddenly stopped near a tree.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the Sultan.

"Nothing much. I heard two owls talking. I wanted to find out what they were talking about," said the Nawab.

The Sultan was surprised. "My friend, do you understand their language?" he asked.

"Yes. I learnt the science of understanding the languages of some of the birds and beasts from a sage," said the Nawab.

"That is wonderful indeed! What were the owls discussing?" asked the inquisitive Sultan.

"My friend, don't bother about it. They are stupid. They don't know what they say!" observed the Nawab.

But the Sultan insisted on knowing what they said. The



Nawab, after showing some unwillingness said, "You see, this owl-couple has a daughter. They proposed her marriage with a young owl in another land. The parents of the would-be bridegroom are demanding ten deserted villages as dowry. The female-owl told her husband that he could offer them a hundred deserted villages instead of ten! It is because there is no dearth of deserted villages under your rule! I am sure they speak nonsense, my friend!"

The Sultan fell silent. Next

day, when the Nawab was leaving he said, "My friend, I am against dowry. I will see to it that the owl-bridegroom does not get a single deserted village."

"I am sure, you can see to it!" commented the Nawab.

The Sultan's life-style changed. He devoted all his time to reorganising his administration. Soon the situation also changed. Those who had left the Sultanate returned to it soon. The villages became as full of life and as green as before.

THE HIDE-AND- SEEK PLAY

The children were playing hide-and-seek. It was now Jay's turn to hide. But it was announced that someone was distributing sweetmeats and the boys ran away, leaving Jay to his hiding place. Jay felt rejected. He was in tears. But his teacher told him, "Rejoice, for you are with God. He too is playing hide-and-seek with men.

He always finds out men, but men seldom care to seek and find him!"



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-19

TREASURY OF KNOWLEDGE

WHO IS HE?

Long long ago, at the source of the river Narmada lived a great sage. He was childless. He prayed to Lord Shiva for the boon of a son. He was asked to choose whether he should have a son who would live long but lead an ordinary life or one who would live only for twelve years but would be a great scholar. The sage chose the latter.

He was blessed with a son, but as the boy grew up, the sage grew sadder. At last, just before the boy completed twelve years of age, the sage told him about his destiny. He retired to a lonely spot and meditated on Shiva. As the time for his death came, the assistants of the God of Death came to take him away, but they could not see him because he had become one with the Lord. The time passed. The boy continued to live for long.

Who is the boy in this legend?

DO YOU KNOW?

1. What would happen if the ice in Antarctica was to melt?
2. Which planet is big enough to contain all the planets in our Solar system?
3. By which method can the Chinese peasants make weather forecasts which prove correct upto 80%?
4. Who gave the idea of using a pendulum to run a clock?
5. Where in India is still to be found a tribe that does not use fire?

KURUKSHETRA

Long long ago, a great king named Kuru performed a Yajna on the site which came to be known as Kurukshetra. Even the

between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Perhaps a greater event to take place here was the birth of the Gita. Lord Krishna



oldest literature of India, the Rigveda, speaks about it. Of course, it became famous because of the unforgettable war that was fought here, the war

revealed this to Arjuna just before the beginning of the war. The exact site of the dialogue is known as Jyotisar.

Through the ages, sages and

yogis lived in Kurukshetra. Sage Vyasa is believed to have composed some of the Mahapuranas here. The illustrious grammarian, Panini, also lived here.

The sacred river Saraswati which has now gone underground, used to flow through the site. It was a very prosperous place. That is why invaders plundered the area time and again.

The modern Kurukshetra is situated 88 km. from Chandigarh. It is not far from Delhi. The

Kurukshetra Lake or Brahmasar is an impressive stretch of water surrounded by temples. In fact, there are 365 shrines in the area. Lakhs of people bathe in the lake during the Solar eclipse.

Kurukshetra, in Haryana state, hums with activity today. There is a university celebrating the hoary name and so many other religious, cultural and educational institutions.

Kurukshetra has always fascinated the people.

An Expanding Earth?

Was the size of the earth half its present size some 600000000 years ago? Has the distance between its two poles much increased?

Prof. F. Ahmed, a well-known Indian geologist, thinks so. He presented his paper on this theme at the Indian Science Congress at Cochin. The theory, of course, is yet to be sufficiently substantiated.



NEWS FLASH

The Home for Holmes

Who has not appreciated the wit and intelligence of Sherlock Holmes? This great detective character, created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, will now have a memorial at 221 B Baker Street—which was his address as given by the famous writer. The house will become a museum of objects associated with Sir Arthur and his writings.



LET US EXPLORE THE WORLD OF LITERATURE

1. What was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle by profession?
2. What is the book containing the most important information on the life of Sri Chaitanya?
3. Who is Helen of Troy?
4. What is the greatest epic in German language and who is its poet?
5. What does Saga mean?

ANSWERS

WHO IS HE?

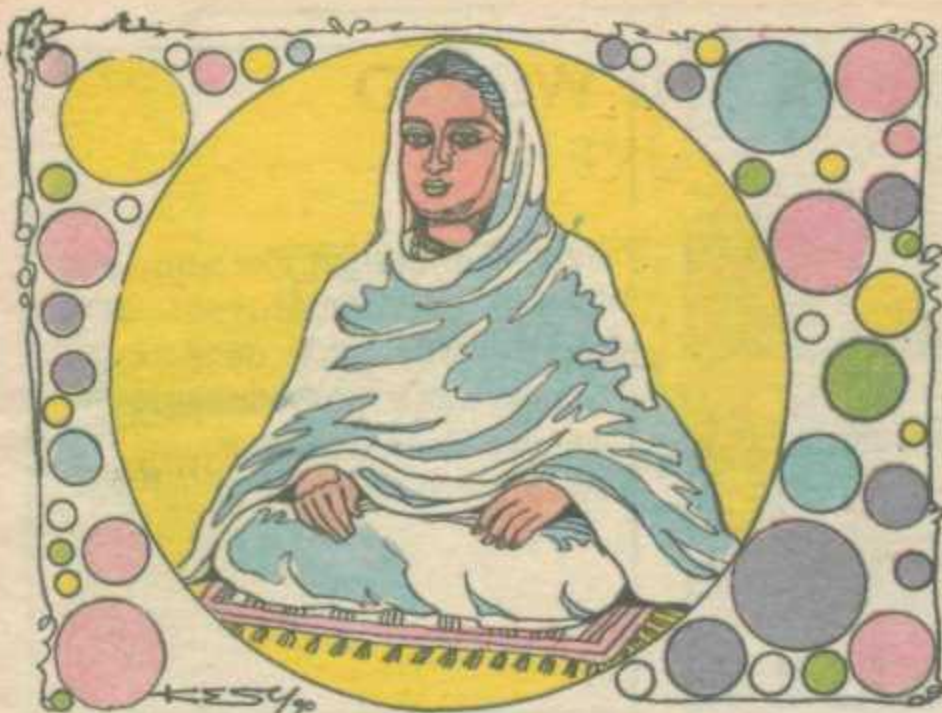
Markandeya, the son of Mrikanda.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

1. The level of the oceans will rise by 240 feet and at least one-fourth of the lands would be submerged.
2. Jupiter.
3. By a study of how the frogs croak.
4. Galileo.
5. In the Andamans.

LITERATURE

1. A physician.
2. *Chaitanya Charitamrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj.
3. The heroine in Homer's epic, *The Iliad*.
4. *Faust* by Goethe.
5. The long narrative legends in prose in Iceland or Norway.

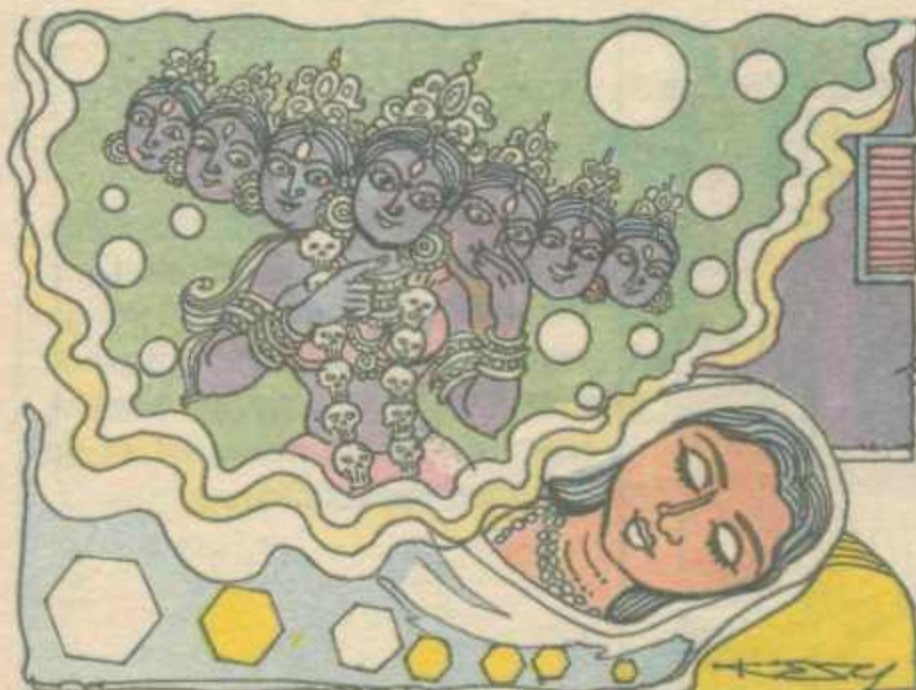


SRI RAMAKRISHNA

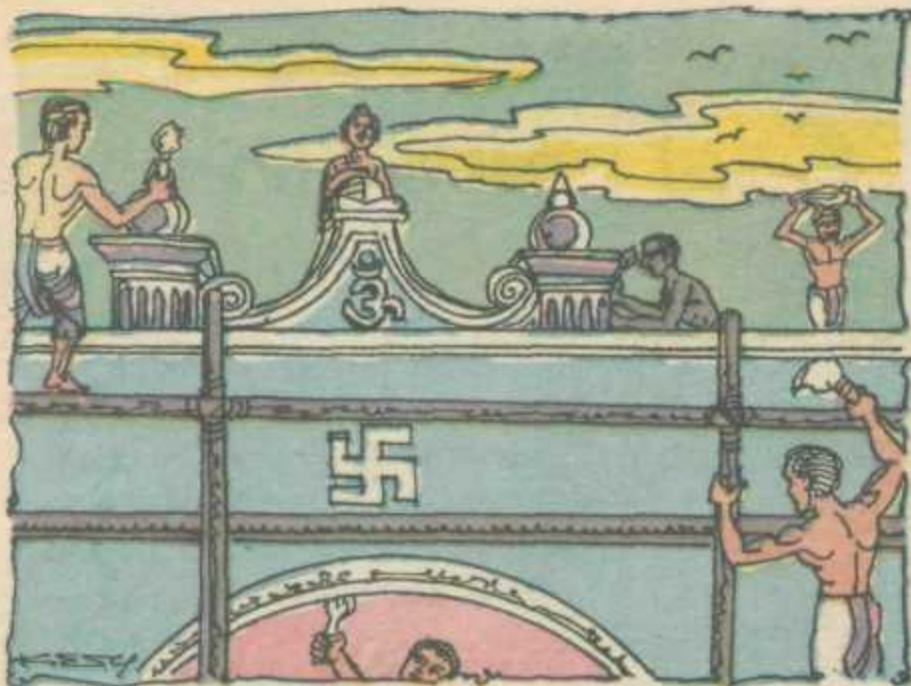
(2)

To the South of Calcutta, at Jambazar, lived Rani Rasmoni, the widow of a great landlord. She was as pious as she was generous. She had a desire to visit the holy city of Varanasi.

She sailed for Varanasi by her boat, her entourage following her in a number of other boats. The first day's voyage came to an end near Dakshineswar.



At night the Rani dreamt the luminous figure of the Divine Mother telling her, "Why do you go to Varanasi? Why not build a temple for me here?" In the morning the Rani surveyed the charming place. She called off her voyage.



The Rani bought the lands and began the construction of a temple. The main deity of the temple was to be Goddess Kali—as the Rani was a devotee of Hers.

Gadadhar's elder brother, Ramkumar, was approached by the Rani's men to consecrate the deity and to reside at Dakshineswar as the chief priest.



Ramkumar accepted the offer. The temple was inaugurated and the deity consecrated through elaborate rituals and ceremonies. A large number of Brahmins from different parts of India attended the function.

The young Gadadhar stayed there with Ramkumar. He liked the place. The sacred Ganga always fascinated him. He spent hours meditating on the river-bank, or in the forest which was close by.



Rani Rasmoni's greatest support was her son-in-law Mathuranath, for she had no son. Mathuranath was a truly wise man. He observed Gadadhar and felt that the young man had something exceptional in him.

Mathuranath persuaded Gadadhar to become a junior priest in the temple. By and by Gadadhar became the main priest. But his method of worship was not always conventional. Sometimes he would forget the rituals and sit in a trance.





Ramkumar, the loving guardian and elder brother of Gadadhar, fell ill and died. Now Gadadhar became the chief priest in the temple of Goddess Kali. He carried on his duties in his own way.

The other Brahmins attached to the temple complained to Mathuranath against Gadadhar's way of performing the Puja. But Mathuranath did not pay any heed to them, for he knew that Gadadhar alone can invoke the Divine presence in the deity.



Gadadhar was most eager to see the Mother Kali in Her living form. He cried and threatened to kill himself by the deity's sword. Suddenly there was an effulgence of light. The compassionate Mother appeared behind the deity.

—To continue



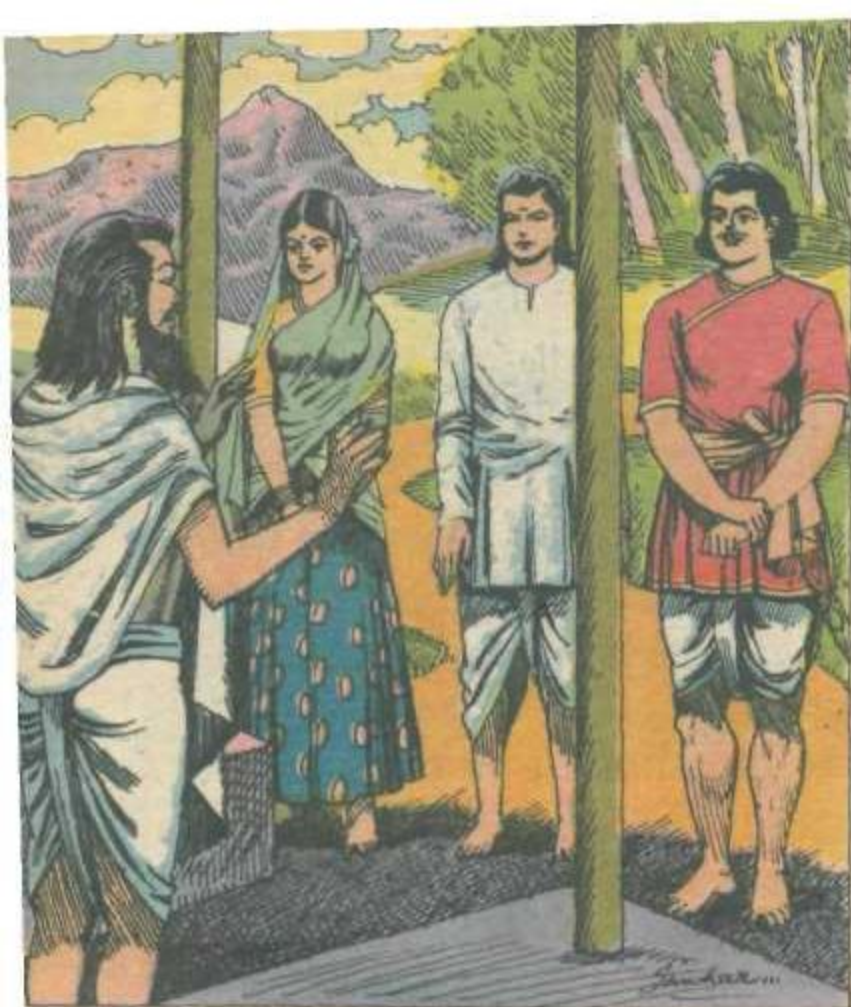
New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire

THREE FRIENDS

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of the roars of thunder and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, are you out on this mission at this unearthly hour at the instigation of any friend? I wonder if it is wise for one to trust one's friends unconditionally. Let me narrate an episode to you in order to explain my doubt. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: On the bank of the river Tamasa in Dandakaranya lived a sage who



was called Vidyasagar. He ran a Gurukul. But because he neither sought any publicity nor any patronage, very few people knew about his school. Fewer were those who sent their children for education to Vidyasagar's school.

Although the Gurukul was meant only for boys, once Vidyasagar admitted a girl to the institute. She was the daughter of a friend of his and Vidyasagar was deeply impressed by the girl's love for literature.

While the girl, Pratima, studied literature and composed poetry, two boys who were admitted along with her, Sujan and Prabir, studied music and martial art respectively.

Pratima, Sujan and Prabir became good friends. Pratima was interested in music. She often made encouraging comments on Sujan's singing. Sujan sang before her any new song he mastered.

Years passed. One day the sage told the three, "My children, all of you have completed your studies successfully. Go home and decide upon your future courses of Action."

The three disciples took tearful leave of their master and then, exchanging their addresses, they also took leave of one another. Pratima's father came to take her. The two young men started for their villages separately.

Prabir was passing through the forest when he heard a cry. He ran in the direction of the noise and saw that four bandits had set themselves upon a traveller who looked like a nobleman. Prabir lost no time in dashing into the gang. A master in martial art, he wounded all the four with swift turns of his sword. The bleeding bandits took to their heels.

The nobleman said, "Young man, I don't know who you are. But for me, you were a God-sent saviour. I am the king of this land. I came into the forest for



hunting. I got separated from my bodyguards when I pursued a deer. I knew that for sometime a gang of bandits harassed people who happened to pass through the forest, but I never imagined that they would dare to attack me. How should I reward you?"

"My lord, if you are keen on pleasing me, kindly arrange for some regular donation to be made to my guru, Vidyasagar, who runs a Gurukul without any help from anybody. If you help him, I will feel rewarded," said Prabir.

"That shall be done. But I will not feel satisfied helping your guru alone. I must do something for you. Will you agree to

become my chief bodyguard?" asked the king.

"I would feel lucky to be in that position, my lord," said Prabir.

The king's companions reached the spot. Prabir joined them. All returned to the palace.

As the king's chief bodyguard, Prabir became very popular with all the courtiers and noblemen, because he was humble, courteous and dutiful.

One day Prabir was walking down a lane in the city when a familiar voice attracted him. He entered a small house and found Sujan teaching songs to a group of boys and girls. Sujan had just come to the city in search of livelihood. What he was earning





by imparting lessons in music, was hardly enough to sustain himself. The two friends were very happy to meet each other.

Said Sujān, "My brother, you must introduce me to the king. Once he recognises my talent, my destiny would change."

"Have patience, my brother," said Prabir. Instead of introducing Sujān to the king, Prabir introduced him to some of the noblemen of the court who were lovers of music. Prabir got access into the aristocratic society. He had more students and he earned better. His singing got wider appreciation.

One evening Sujān met Pratima at a function in a noble-

man's house. After his programme, Sujān spoke to Pratima in private, "Pratima, Prabir is so envious of me that he would not introduce me to the king. But I know how much influence he has over the king! Will you please request Prabir to take me to the king?"

"Why not! We have just settled down in the city. I propose to meet Prabir in a day or two," said Pratima.

Pratima called on Prabir the very next day. Prabir was delighted to see her. After some friendly talks, Pratima asked Prabir if he would care to present Sujān to the king.

"It should not be any problem now!" said Prabir. He told the king about his musician friend the same day. "Yes, yes, we have heard about this singer from some of my courtiers. We will be pleased to listen to his demonstration," said the king.

Sujān was invited to sing before the king. The king was much impressed. He founded a college of music in the city. Sujān was appointed its principal-cum-director. He became the talk of the town. He received greater recognition in the society than Prabir.



One day Sujan met Pratima and said, "Pratima, I am a musician, you are a poet. You will compose lyrics. I will put them to tune. Won't it be wonderful? Let us marry."

"Sujan, I love your musical talent all right, but please don't bring forward the proposal for our marriage," was Pratima's response.

Sujan went away. A fortnight later Pratima met Prabir and said, "My parents would like me to get married. However, they have told me that I can choose my bridegroom if I so please. If I don't, they will choose for me."

"That is most sensible of them. Well, Pratima, do you have any

choice? Are you inclined towards anybody?" asked Prabir.

Pratima blushed and said, "Why should I report this to you otherwise?"

Prabir looked thrilled. He said, "Pratima, I will consider myself the luckiest person if I could marry you!"

And the two were married in a short time.

The vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, I have a few doubts. Why was Prabir so reluctant to present Sujan before the king, knowing well that Sujan was a talented singer? Does this not prove that he was really





envious of Sujan? Secondly why did Pratima prefer Prabir to Sujan? How did she fail to realise that Prabir was envious by nature? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith replied King Vikram, "Prabir was as noble as he was conscientious. He had won the king's favour in an unusual circumstance. He did not wish to make unnecessary use of the favour. He knew that Sujan was a gifted singer. He introduced him to music-lovers so that in the most natural way the king would come to know about him. By the

time Pratima told Prabir about Sujan, the time had been ripe. So, Prabir sounded the king about him.

"The argument Sujan kept before Pratima in favour of their marriage was quite valid. But love and attraction are not matters for argument. Besides, Pratima was intelligent enough to know that Prabir was nobler than Sujan. By accusing Prabir of enviousness, Sujan had proved his own meanness before Pratima. On the other hand, Pratima understood that Prabir had helped Sujan in the right way."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

Noble blood is an accident of fortune; noble actions characterize the great.

—Goldoni



HOW PRAJAPUR WAS SAVED

Once upon a time there was a land named Prajapur. "Praja" means the common man. The land was so named because it had no king. The people of the land elected a Council. The Council governed the land.

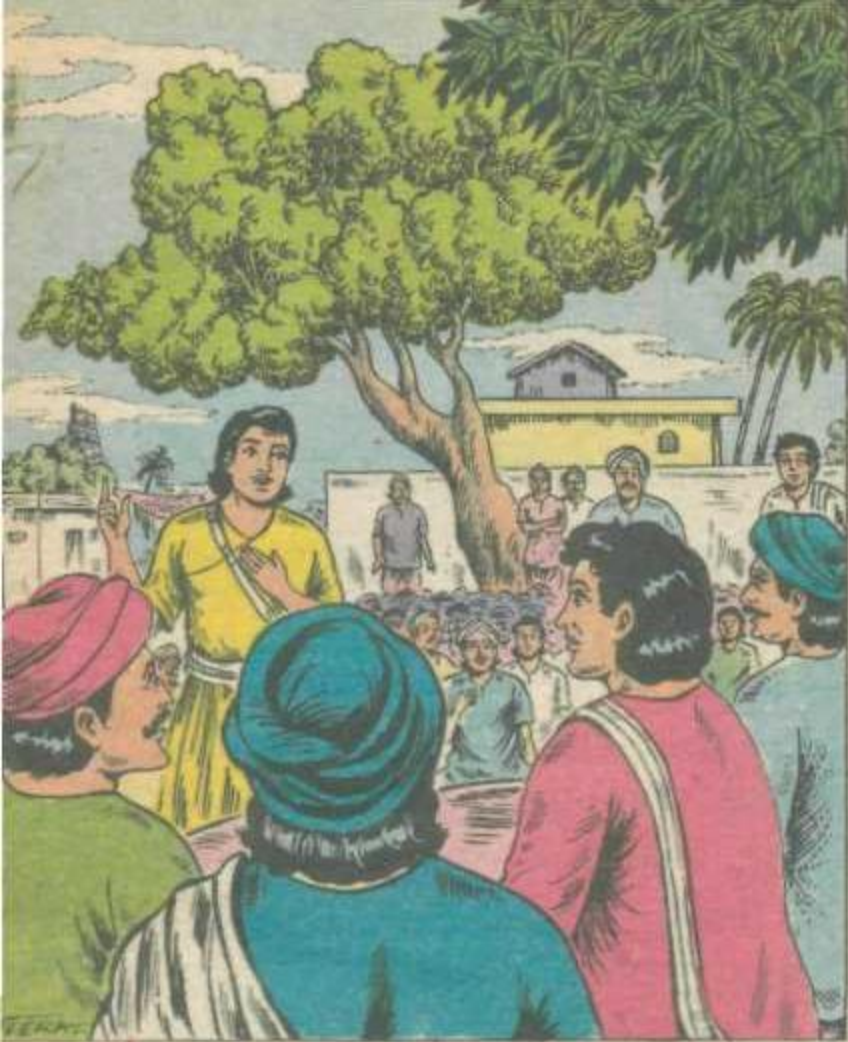
Across the river was the kingdom of Vishal. It was ruled by a good king named Mahagupta who appreciated the way the people of Prajapur governed themselves. In fact, he assured the People's Council of Prajapur that it need not spend money on an army. Vishal will never attack them. If there was any attack on Prajapur by any other kingdom, Vishal would defend Prajapur.

The people of Prajapur were happy. Instead of maintaining an army, they spent their resources on building schools and temples and digging lakes and laying

parks. Prajapur prospered far better than any other kingdom of the time.

Unfortunately King Mahagupta died all on a sudden. His younger brother Shobhagupta occupied the throne. Shobhagupta was opposite of Mahagupta in nature. Almost the first act of his as the king was to mobilise the army of Vishal. He was envious of the prosperous Prajapur. How can a land exist without a king? Prajapur must have a king! That king must be himself! In other words, Prajapur must become a district of Vishal.

Prajapur had some well-wishers among the people of Vishal. They alerted the Council of Prajapur. The Council summoned all the village chiefs and discussed the issue. How to save



their land without an army? It had been a mistake on their part to go without an army.

Among the village chiefs was a young man named Tej. "We may not have an army," he said, "but we have patriots. We the young men would defend our land. Even if we had an army, it was likely that the army would be defeated by Vishal which is a much bigger land. But who can defeat us?"

His statement no doubt brought hope to many, but the elders in the Council were sceptic. "How can some untrained youths face a powerful army?" they wondered.

Tej, however, went out to mobilise the youths. "I don't want many young men. Just fifty would do," he said. There were more than fifty young men ready to die for Prajapur. Tej told them his plan for defending Prajapur. Between Prajapur and Vishal flowed the great river Narmada. There was a bridge over the river. No more than two men could walk on the bridge side by side. Tej taught some of his comrades how to remain hidden under the bridge, hanging on to the pillars. They practised this for many days. Meanwhile some of them went over to Vishal and kept a close watch on its army.

At last came the day when the army of Vishal began to march towards Prajapur. But as the soldiers began crossing the bridge, they fell one after another. Shobhagupta who stood on the bank of the river could not understand what happened to his soldiers. When he understood the problem, he asked his soldiers to cross the river by boats.

But the young men of Prajapur rained arrows on the invaders. They were so swift that some of the boats were full of dead bodies



even when they had crossed only half the breadth of the river.

Shobhagupta fumed with anger. "Come what may, proceed by the bridge. Even if a hundred would fall dead, the others should make a dash for the other shore over their dead bodies."

Tej understood the gravity of the situation. "We must destroy the bridge right now!" he called out to his comrades.

He and half a dozen of his trusted lieutenants rushed onto the bridge and started hacking it. From the other side Shobhagupta sent his soldiers to kill the group. Even when the soldiers were seen coming with raised swords, Tej and his comrades went on with their work. The soldiers had just reached them when the bridge collapsed. All on the bridge, including Tej, fell in the river.

"Drag that fellow into the boat. I want him alive!" Shobhagupta commanded some of his men, pointing his finger at Tej who was swimming. Shobhagupta's men captured him and took him to their king.

It was already evening. The king was sitting near a fire when Tej was produced before him.



The king surveyed him angrily and said, "What a dreamer you are, young man! You believe that you will be able to defend Prapapur against us!"

"Well, we have defended it!" said Tej.

"You have defended it for today or for a few days. But what can you do with your puny arrows when I will arrange for large boats with huge shields and cross the river?" demanded the king.

"We will still fight and defend our land," said Tej.

"I will burn you and your friends alive. What then?" asked the king.



"We will not fear being burnt alive!" answered Tej.

"What a vain boasting! Have you ever tasted fire?" asked the king, laughing.

Suddenly, with a jerk, Tej snapped the rope with which his hands were tied. He sat down near the king and extended his left hand into the fire. The king

could not bear to keep looking at the scene. He caught hold of his hand and removed it from the fire. But the king could not but appreciate the courage and stamina of Tej. He sat speechless for a moment. Then he said, "Young man, I respect you. For your sake, I will take my hands off my plan for conquering Prajapur!"

A KIND FRIEND

Rajnikumar knocked on the door of his classmate Sukumar, the son of a doctor, and said with great anxiety, "Sukumar, I have just swallowed a pencil-cutter. Will you please ask your father to do the needful?"

"Of course, I will. But he is away and shall be back after two hours," reported Sukumar.

"What should I do till then?" asked Rajnikumar.

Sukumar thought for a while and came out with this solution, "Well, you can borrow my pencil-cutter and use it."





Four Smiles and a Dialogue

Centuries ago Vidisha was the capital of a prosperous kingdom. King Suryakant of Vidisha had four sons. He sent them to Varanasi for their studies. They spent eight years there and returned to Vidisha.

The king was happy to see them. In a few days he realised that all the four princes were intelligent and dutiful.

He called his minister, Mahidhar, into his private consultation hall. "My friend," he said, "let the four princes be taught politics and diplomacy by you."

"My lord, they have studied in the finest academy in the country. Their teachers have given them excellent certificates. If they have to learn anything further, they should learn from you, not from me!" said the minister.

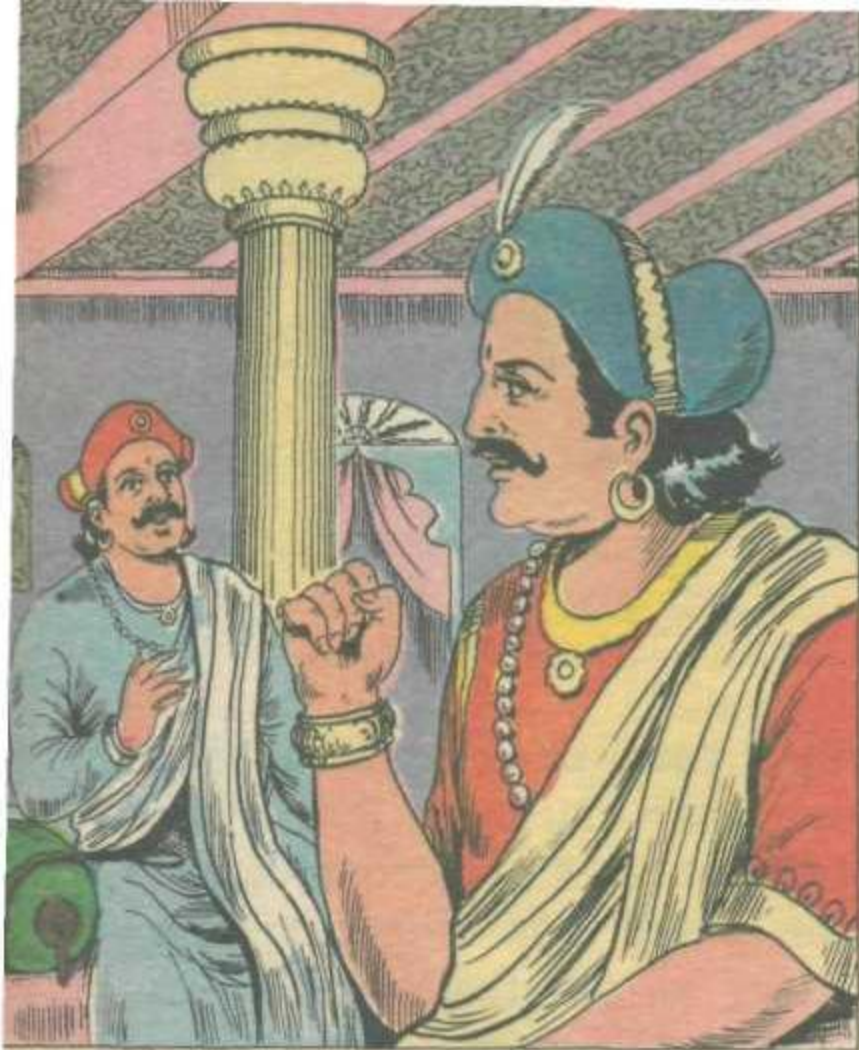
"My dear minister, I must say

that your knowledge in such subjects is much greater than that of mine. It is your counsel that has saved our kingdom from crises at different times. You must teach them," insisted the king.

But the minister said, "My lord, the princes have learnt the theories of politics and diplomacy well. The practical application of the theories would depend on their experience and talent. Why to waste their time? Better let them begin looking after different departments of the administration," rejoined the minister.

The king lowered his voice and said, "My friend, my real motive is different. I want you to tell me who among the four princes deserves to succeed me to the throne."

"What!" the minister



expressed his surprise. "Do you want to break the tradition of our land? Is it not the eldest son who inherits the kingdom?"

"We should not ignore true merit for the sake of tradition or convention. For many generations our forefathers had only one son each. When there were two or three, it was found that the first son was more capable than the others. Now I have a feeling that all my four sons are of good stuff! Why should we not choose the best one among them for the benefit of the kingdom?" said the king.

The minister smiled, but said nothing.

"Why did you smile?" asked the king, curious.

"My lord, I do not wish to give out the reason for my smile, for that might hurt your feelings," said the minister humbly.

"My friend, your words will never hurt me. Please be frank with me," the king insisted.

"Thanks. Now, be prepared for a bit of shock. The eldest prince, Jyotikant, is in love with my daughter, Kumudini. I can tell you confidently that Kumudini is not inferior to any princess in any of our neighbouring kingdoms so far as beauty, culture and humaneness are concerned. But can these qualities make her acceptable to you as your daughter-in-law and the probable queen of the future? Perhaps no. You will like to choose a girl from a royal family. Accepting my daughter into your dynasty would be a departure from the tradition!"

The king was stunned. He composed himself soon and said, "Well, it is for me to decide whether your daughter qualifies for the position of my daughter-in-law or not!"

The minister smiled again, but kept quiet.

"Why did you smile?" asked

the king.

"My lord, first of all, any young man has the right to choose his life-partner. But that is a different matter. Between you and me, surely I have a greater right to object to Kumudini marrying the prince than your right to object to the prince marrying Kumudini—if at all any objection is to be made!" said the minister.

"How do you say that you have a greater right?" challenged the king.

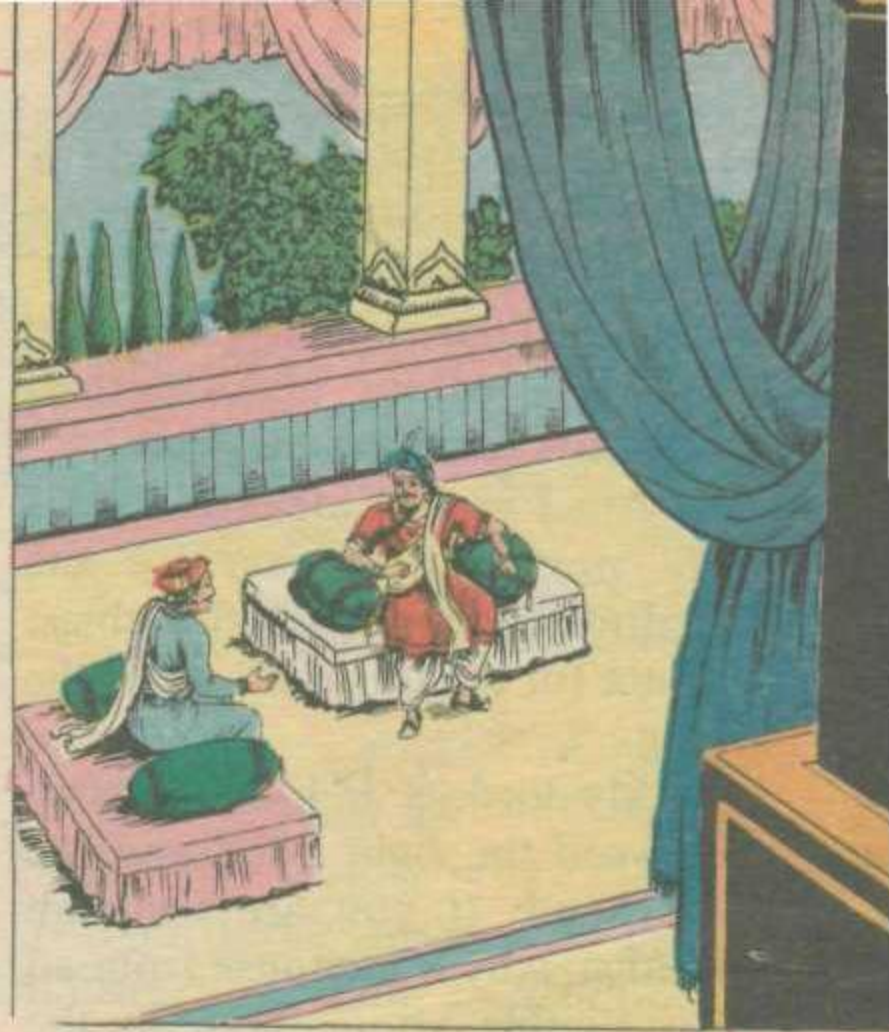
"My lord, if I can decide who should or should not be the king, can't I decide who should or should not be the queen?" asked the minister.

The king kept quiet. A man of conscience that he was, he said after a moment, "My friend, if Prince Jyotikant loves Kumudini, I have no objection to his marrying her. I have been seeing Kumudini since her childhood. She is a nice girl—better than any girl I know! But now you must decide which prince should succeed me to the throne."

The minister smiled for a third time.

"What makes you smile?" asked the king.

"My lord, now that we are to



become close relatives, I need not feel any reservation before you. Knowing that Jyotikant is to be my son-in-law, can I recommend any other prince for the throne?" said the minister.

"But I did not think that you would be so selfish!" remarked the king.

"My lord, I will not be selfish. As soon as it came to my notice that Jyotikant was secretly meeting my daughter, I kept a close watch on him. I have no doubt about the fact that he deserves to succeed you. Only when I was satisfied on this point, I kept before you the proposal for his marriage with my daughter,"

said the minister.

"But this too is a kind of selfishness. I thought, you are an idealist!" observed the king.

"I am your minister. I cannot be more of an idealist than yourself!" said the Minister.

"Am I not an idealist? Was I not prepared to sacrifice the tradition and choose the ablest prince for the throne?" asked the king.

"My lord, it is like choosing between the right hand and the left hand. If you are truly an idealist, why not choose from all the eligible young men in the kingdom? Why from four princes only? I am sure, there are many

young men who may excel our princes in different qualities!" observed the minister.

The king sat in silence.

"Pardon me, my lord," said the minister again, "you have to be idealistic as well as practical. You have been idealistic in keeping your mind open to choose the heir to the throne, but you have been practical in keeping your choice limited to the princes. The princes have been trained for administration. Besides, the people of the kingdom will not easily accept as their king someone from the public, while there are four capable princes before them. So far as I





am concerned, I should be more practical than idealistic. Indeed, the king can be idealistic. He has the freedom to be so. The minister is only to advise the king. Once the king has taken a decision, the minister's work is to put it into practice. I know that Kumudini would be a great support to the prince when the latter ascends the throne. That is why I have felt no hesitation in

bringing the matter to your notice," said the minister as he smiled.

"You smile again, my dear minister!" the king pointed out.

"This time, my lord, mine is a smile of pure happiness," said the minister.

Before long Prince Jyotikant was declared the crown prince and he was married to Kumudini.

THE RIGHT DEGREE

The old Ramu asked his equally old friend Kanu, "While passing by your house, I saw the name-plate of your elder son with his M.A. added to it, of your daughter with her B.A. added to it, of your younger son with his B.Sc. added to it. Surprisingly, I saw someone has scribbled O.M.F.J after your name. I don't think you had obtained any degree!" Kanu replied, "The letters stand for 'Only Member in the Family with a Job'. My grandson has scribbled them."

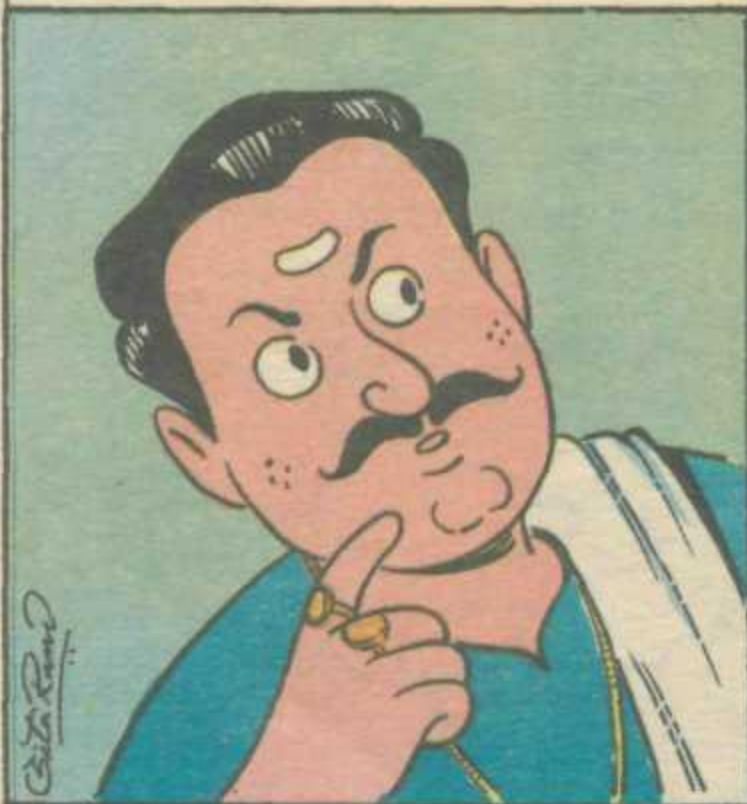
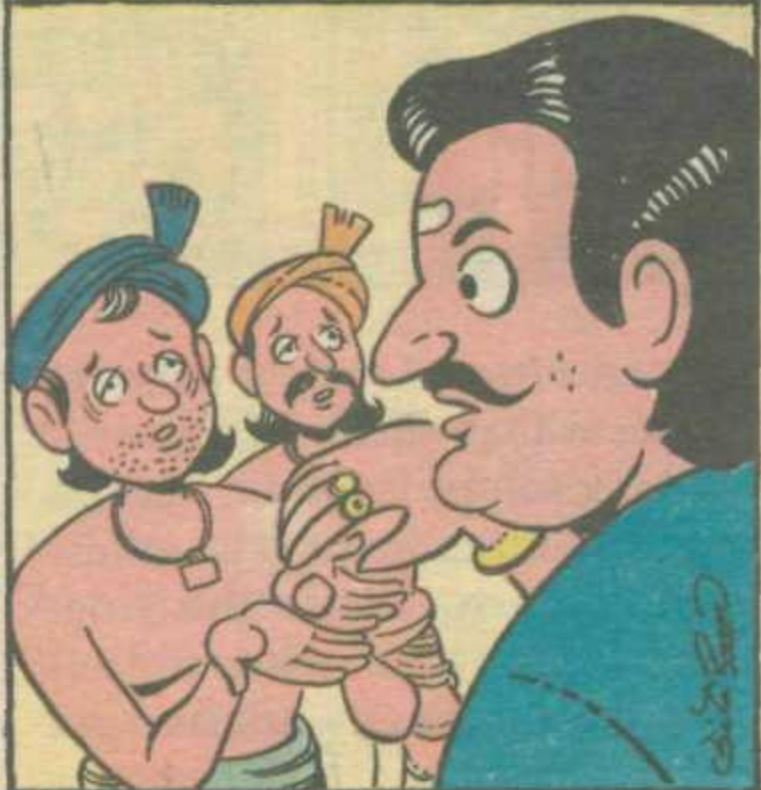


SOMETHING MORE!



Bularao was not only the landlord of the village, but also the moneylender. Lately he had decided to add to his income by becoming a physician!

Some people, out of their fear for him, were obliged to take his prescriptions. Of course he extorted his fees from them!



But Bularao was not quite satisfied with his practice. He must convince the people that he was a great physician!

A new teacher had joined the village school. He was intelligent and kind and everybody loved him.



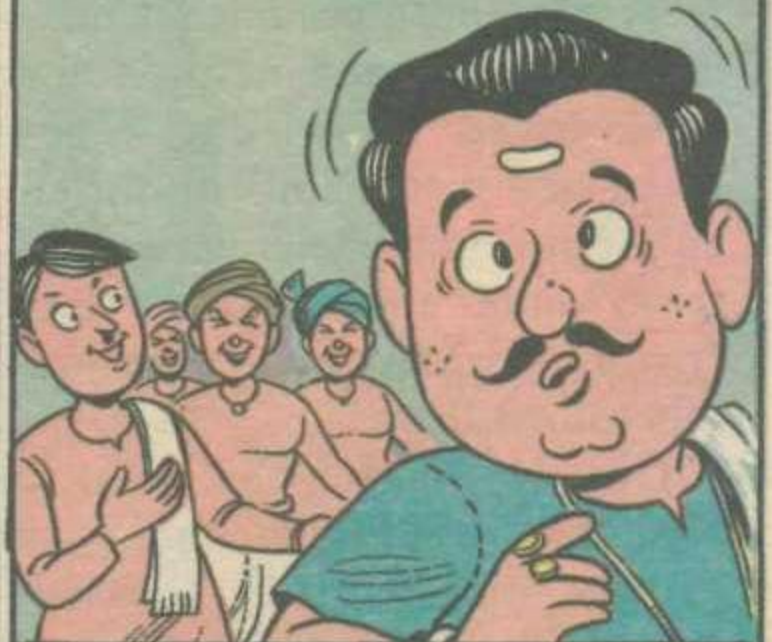
One day the teacher took ill. Bularao rushed to him and gave him medicines, thinking that his own reputation will increase when the teacher is cured.



Bularao kept on giving him medicines day after day. The teacher was cured. "Is it not because of my medicines?" asked Bularao.

"It is because of your medicines," agreed the teacher.

"Then, will you say so before the villagers?" asked Bularao enthusiastically. "I will say so and say something more!" promised the teacher.



Bularao called some villagers "Come and see the noble teacher fully cured because of my medicines!"

"It is because of your medicines—to say a little more, because of my not touching them at all!" explained the teacher.



A CHALLENGE

Kishore had newly come to the town. He took a room on rent and lived alone, eating in a nearby hotel. His landlord, Sujan, was another young man. Very soon both became friends.

Both were good-natured and both loved knowledge. They often had discussions on different topics and their discussions were quite animated. A third friend, Krishnakumar occasionally joined them.

One day, as the three sat in Kishore's room, munching crisp ground-nuts freshly roasted, Kishore said, in the course of their conversation, "There is a correct answer to every question; there is a solution to every problem. But, of course, everything depends on the person who

faces the question or who faces the problem."

"You are wrong. There cannot be an answer to every question," commented Sujan. He picked up a handful of ground-nuts and keeping his fist clenched, asked, "Can you tell me correctly how many nuts are there in my fist?"

Kishore laughed and said, "I did not mean this kind of question. I meant philosophical questions. However, even at this level there is an answer which cannot be called incorrect."

"What is that answer?" asked Sujan.

"As many ground-nuts as your fist can contain!" replied Kishore.

Sujan and Krishnakumar laughed. "Yes, this too is an



answer which cannot be dismissed as incorrect," said Krishnakumar.

"I agree. But I doubt if there is a solution to every kind of problem! Now, I am going to create a problem for you. Solve it," said Sujan.

"What is the problem?"

"I am here in your room. You would like me to leave your room within ten minutes for some important reason. But I am in no mood to oblige you. What can you do?" challenged Sujan.

"Well, I can make you leave my room within ten minutes!" said Kishore.

"Can you? I challenge you to do so. If you succeed, I will not take any rent from you for the room for three months!" declared Sujan.

Kishore smiled and said, "Sorry, my friend, I cannot send

you out of my room. But if you are outside my room, I can make you come in within a minute!"

"Let us see you do so!" said Sujan and he was outside the room in the twinkling of an eye.

Kishore and Krishnakumar laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" asked Sujan, standing outside the room.

"Don't you understand?" asked Krishnakumar. "Kishore has already succeeded in meeting your challenge. He has led you out of his room!"

Sujan now joined them in their laughter. Coming in he shook hands with Kishore and said, "I will be true to my promise. You are exempted from paying any rent for three months!"



WORLD OF NATURE



Deepest Cave

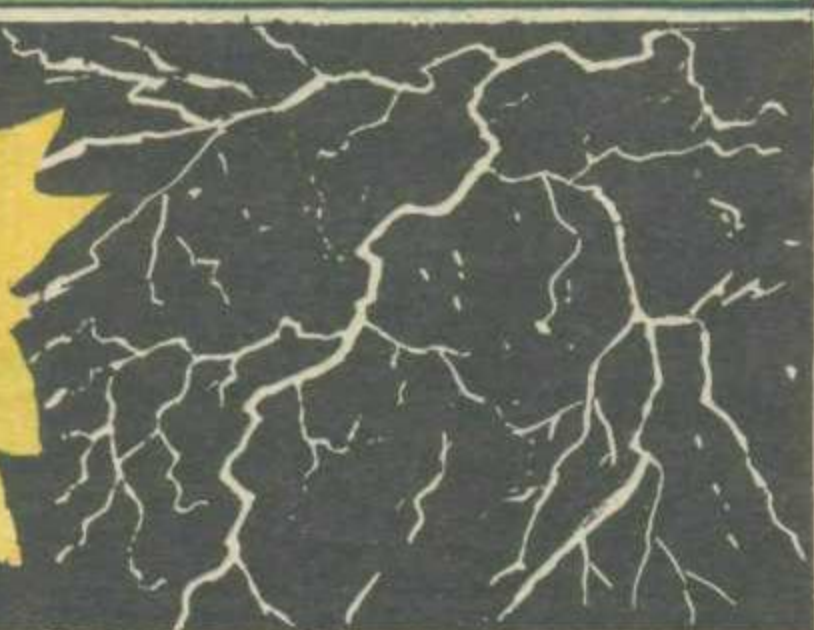
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THE MISSING THING

The Sheikh gave his cook two pounds of meat and asked him to prepare a special dish for his dinner. Then he went out to visit his friends.

Someone told the cook that the Sheikh had left for the town on an urgent business and was not likely to return even the next day. The cook ate up the delicious dish, sharing it with his wife.

But the report the cook had got was wrong. The Sheikh returned before dinner and demanded the meat dish.

The cook, quite nervous, said, "Sir, the cat ate the meat!"

"Is that so?" asked the Sheikh. He caught hold of the cat and weighed it. The scale showed that it weighed two pounds.

"If this is the cat, where is the meat? If this is the meat, where is the cat?" he wondered aloud.



TOWARDS BETTER ENGLISH

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA

S. Semmel of Madurai wants to know what is meant by the phrase, *Between the Devil and the Deep Sea*.

This means an awkward situation when one has to choose between two courses of action equally unpleasant or undesirable. We do not know how the proverb originated. Some scholars think that it owes its origin to an event in the life of Christ. Once he set a man free from possession by some devilish forces called Legion. The forces went and possessed a herd of swine. The swine jumped and ran madly and got drowned in the sea. Christ could have either let those devilish forces continue to possess the man or he had to see the loss of the swine.

A proverb close to this is *Between Scylla and Charybdis*. Scylla was a monster who sat on a rock opposite Charybdis which was a dangerous whirlpool, according to Homer's *Ulysses*. Trying to avoid one, the navigators could be in peril because of the other.

K.V. Vaiphei Veng of Manipur would like to know the difference between *Manytimes* and *Many a time*. There is no difference so far as their meaning is concerned. An imaginative writer chooses between two such expressions keeping in view the rhythm or sound-balance of the sentence.





LET US KNOW

Who was Plato?

—P. Krishna Priya, Vijayawada.

The ancient city-state of Athens in Greece had three eminent philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Plato (427-347 B.C.) was a student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle. He founded a school known as the Academy where the two main subjects taught were philosophy and mathematics. His famous work is the *Dialogues* and its most famous part is the *Republic*. According to him a true philosopher is "a spectator of all time and all existence... a gentle and noble character" who "desires all truth" and who "seeks to be like God as far as that is possible for man."

Plato has been the greatest single influence on the Western philosophy.

Is it true that there was a huge magnetic stone on Konarak temple that attracted enemy ships which were smashed on the shore?

—Laxman Bindhani, Rourkela.

If such a stone were there, it would wreak havoc also with friendly ships. It was not there. Besides, the magnificent Sun temple of Konarak, like any other great temple, was meant for worship of the deity and not for disturbing the course of the ships. Nearby, at the mouth of the river Chandrabhaga, was situated a prosperous port. Hence the architects could not have fixed such a stone to the temple even if such a stone ever existed.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



K.S. Vijayaker



S.B. Takalkar

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for March'90 goes to:—

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PICKS FROM THE WISE

Victory belongs to the most persevering.

To pity distress is but human; to relieve it is Godlike.

— **Napoleon**

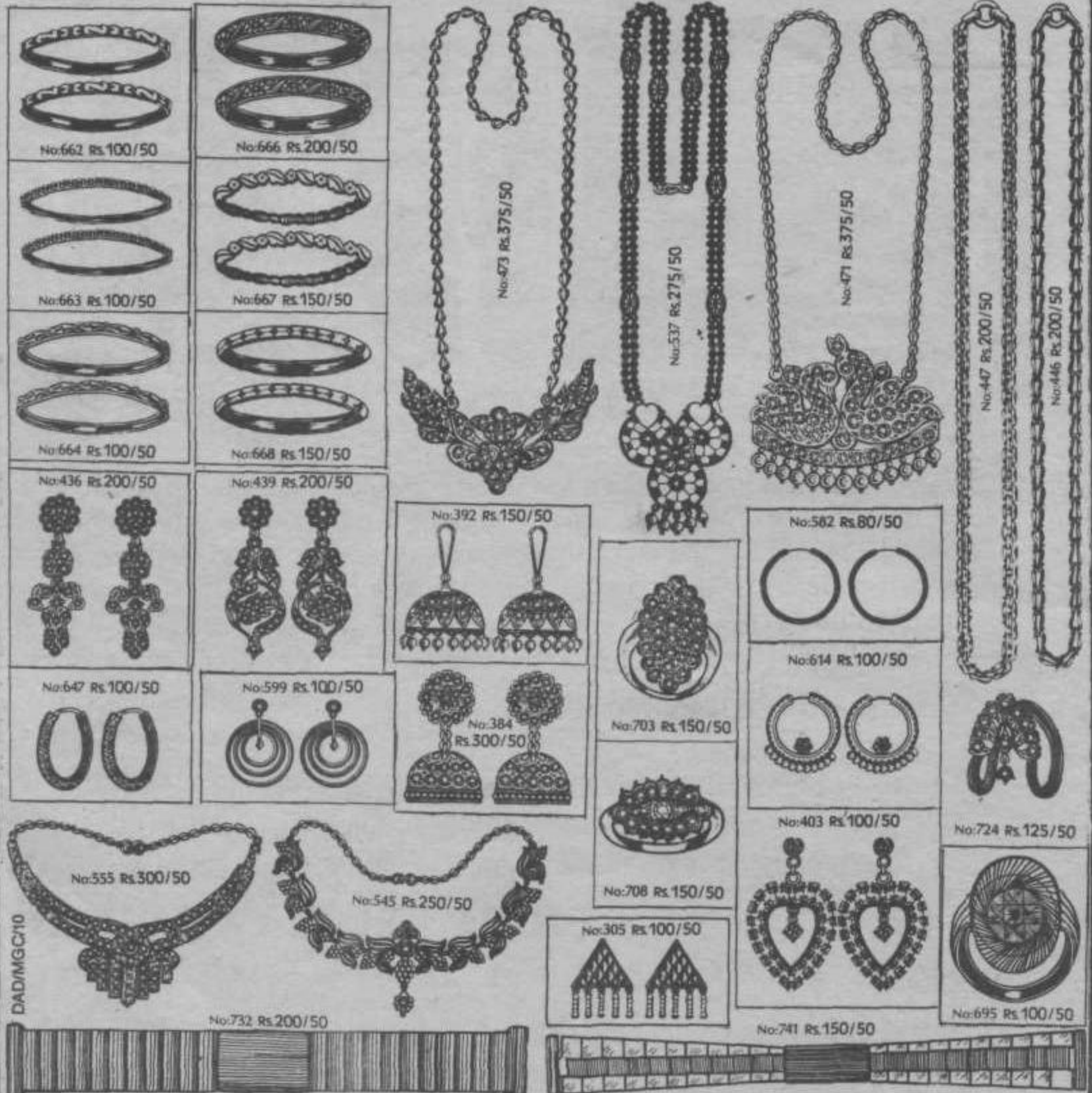
— **Horace Mann**

The philosophy of one century is the commonsense of the next.

— **Henry Ward Beecher**

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Hey!
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mango sweet!

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mango inside,
birdy!

It's got real
mango inside,
birdy!

Sssssssshut up now
and taste my
mango sweet!

Sssssssshut up now
and taste my
mango sweet!

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what I'm gonna
call it...

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ya say?

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